



**Throwback: The bold 'n' beautiful Moon Moon Sen bares all!**

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# STARBUZZ



**Shocking!**  
Has the  
pandemic  
crippled  
the film  
industry?



**Beautiful:**  
Katrina  
Kaif's look  
unveiled!



# Exclusive

Has 'real' hero Sonu Sood stolen a march over  
the other 'reel' heroes?





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# STARDUST

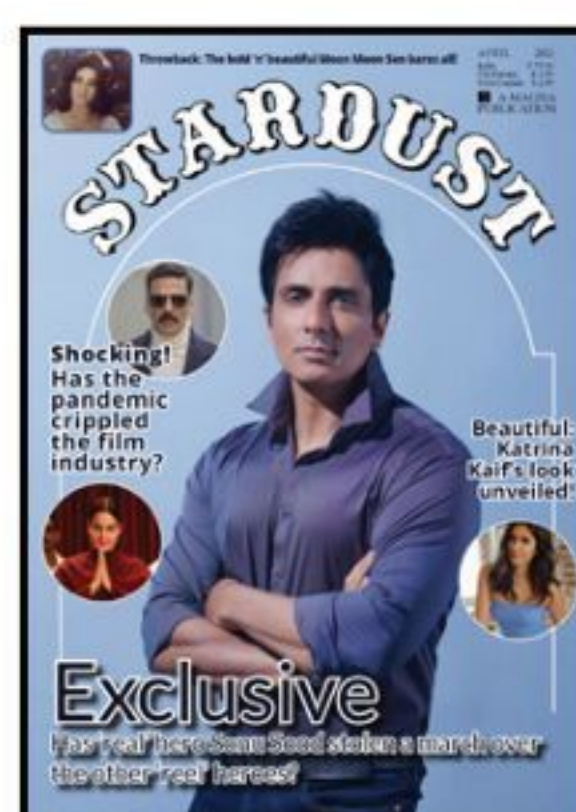
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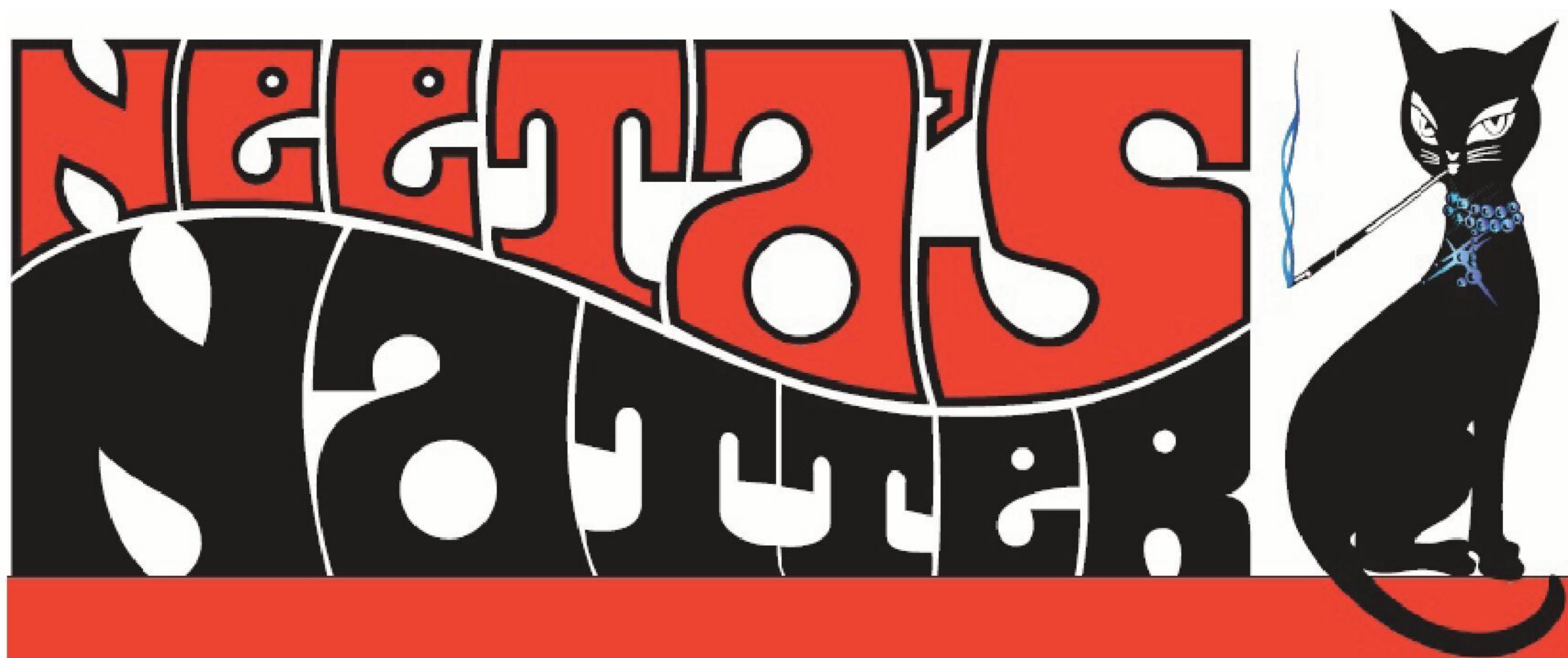
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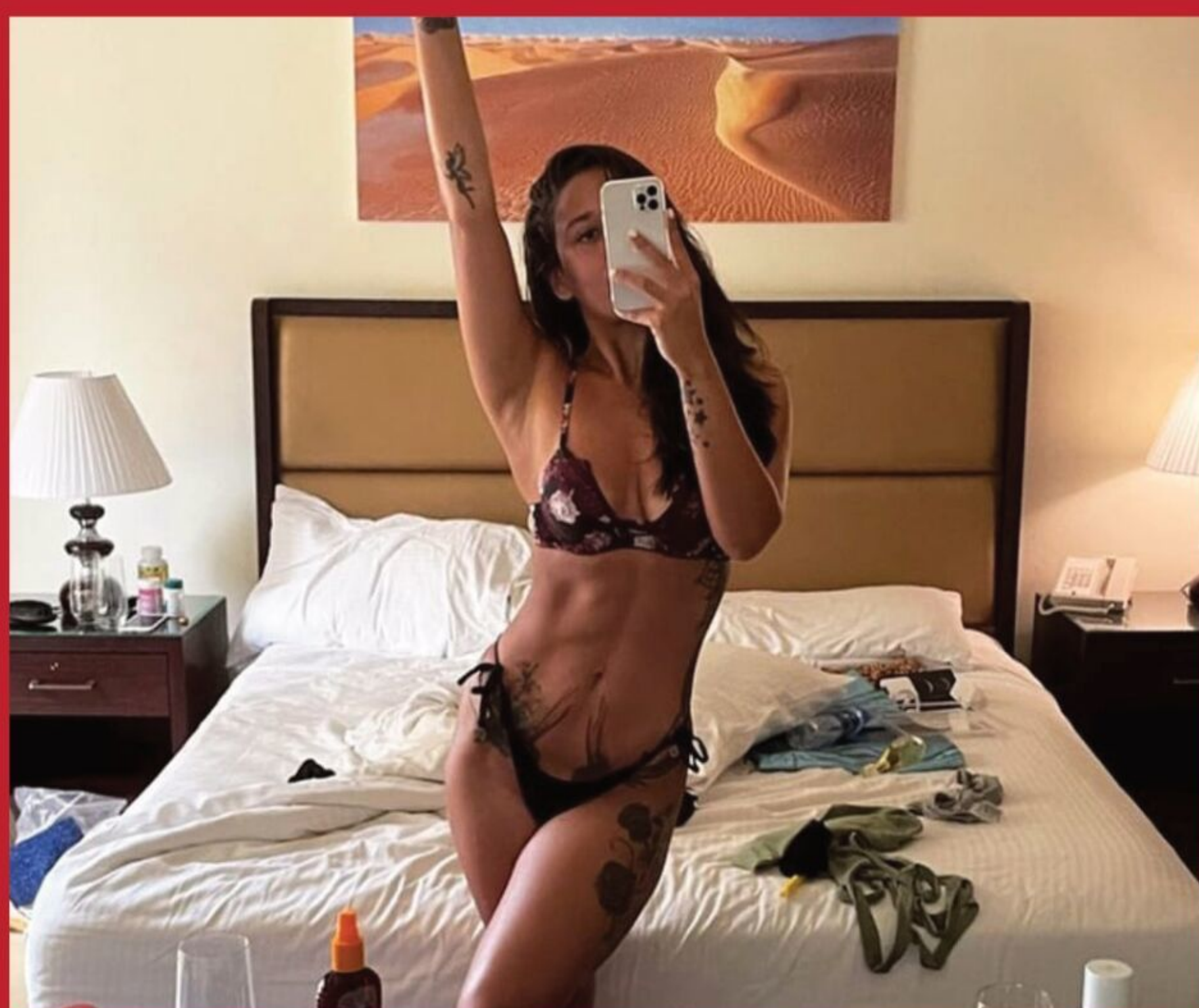
Salman Khan is soon taking over the mantle of being the big daddy of Bollywood from KJo. And why do we call *Bhaijaan* that? Well, simply because now supposedly, he's all set to produce a film starring his sister Alvira's daughter Alizeh and Sunny Deol's younger son Rajveer. Well, with all the pairings being made in Bollywood 'Galaxy', things sure have become quite incestuous, no?



There's one actor who is still acing no matter what the medium is and it is none-other than Kajol. She has performed extremely well as a neurotic *gaali* swearing actress-dancer in the webseries *Tribhanga* directed by Renuka Shahane. And though Ajay may put her down in a jocular manner as "old", still the actor always manages to rise from the ashes like the proverbial phoenix.



By the way, Kajol and Ajay's daughter Nysa is closely following her mom's footsteps. Supposedly, she danced to her mom's hit songs at her school event and the audience was all praises for her. Looks like here's another star kid who is all ready to foray in Bollywood. KJo, are you listening?



Another star kid making news is Krishna Shroff, Jackie Shroff's sexy 'wild child' daughter. Supposedly, a troller called her '*bekaar*' in comparison to her brother Tiger and then made

things worse by calling her *besharam* for posing in a bikini. Krishna not one to shut up told him 'thank you for your concern sir, now please \*\*\*\* off! Ouch!

Covid-19 is playing Cupid ... Well, all the love birds from Arjun Kapoor to Malaika Arora, Ranbir Kapoor to Alia Bhatt to now Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif have tested positive almost together. So what if some of the lovers still haven't come out of the closet - ahem we are so talking about Kat and Vicky- but the pandemic has forced them to announce that they were most probably together and have contracted the virus together. These sure are changing times.





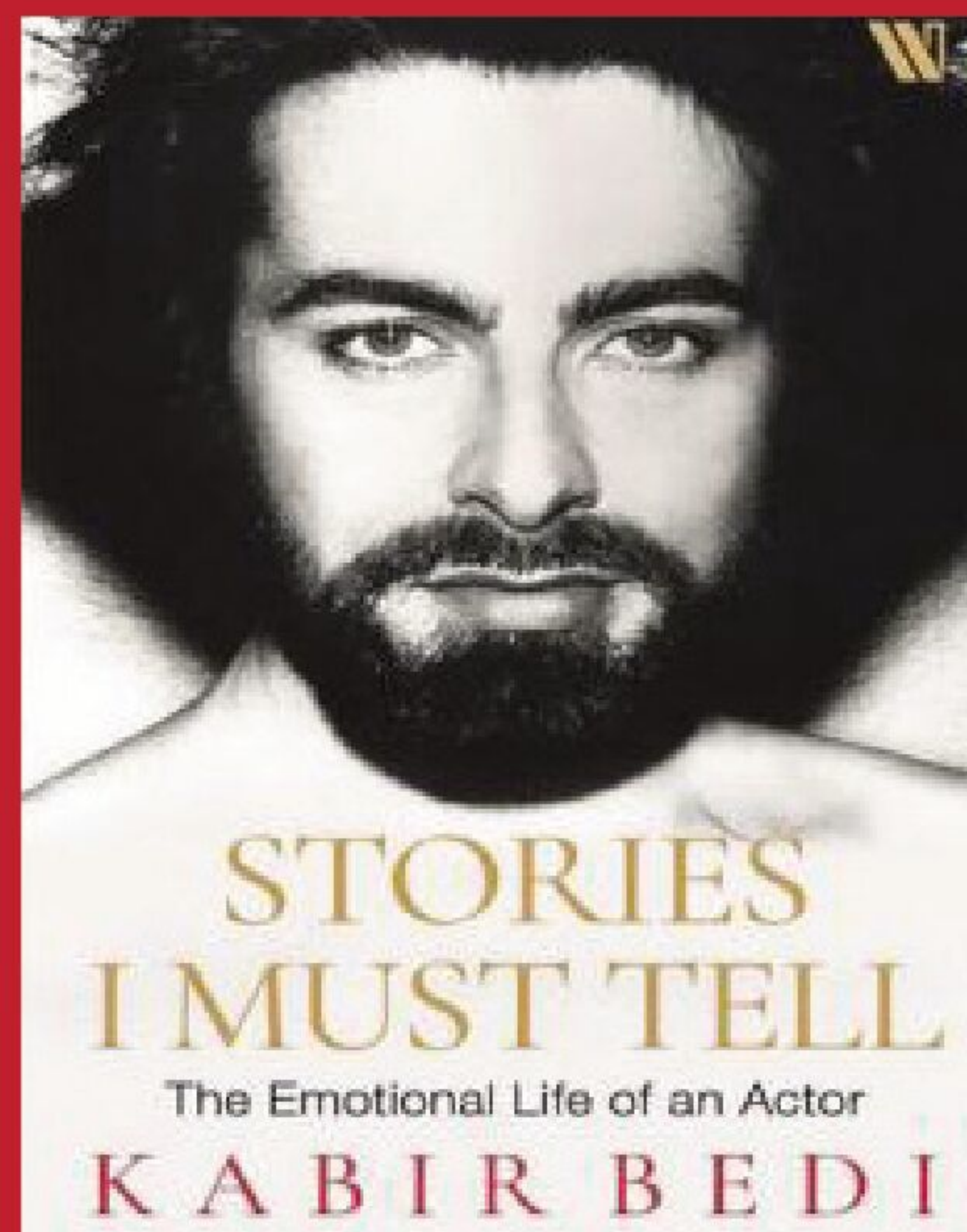
Actor Govinda has tested negative for Covid-19 after six days. Elated he exclaimed... "I have tested negative. We have done the RT-PCR test and the CT Scan as well to be double sure. There are absolutely no clinical symptoms." So what did he do in self-isolation? Can you believe it? Our Chi-Chi baba took to reading books and watching movies. Do you think his and Salman's Partner was one of the films he watched again to relive old memories?



Talking about *partners*, it's absolutely lovely to watch Arjun Rampal's two daughters play with the new addition to the family – Arjun and his partner Gabriella's little baby son. It sure is mature of Meher, Arjun and Gabriella to get along so well. Ah, society sure has changed.

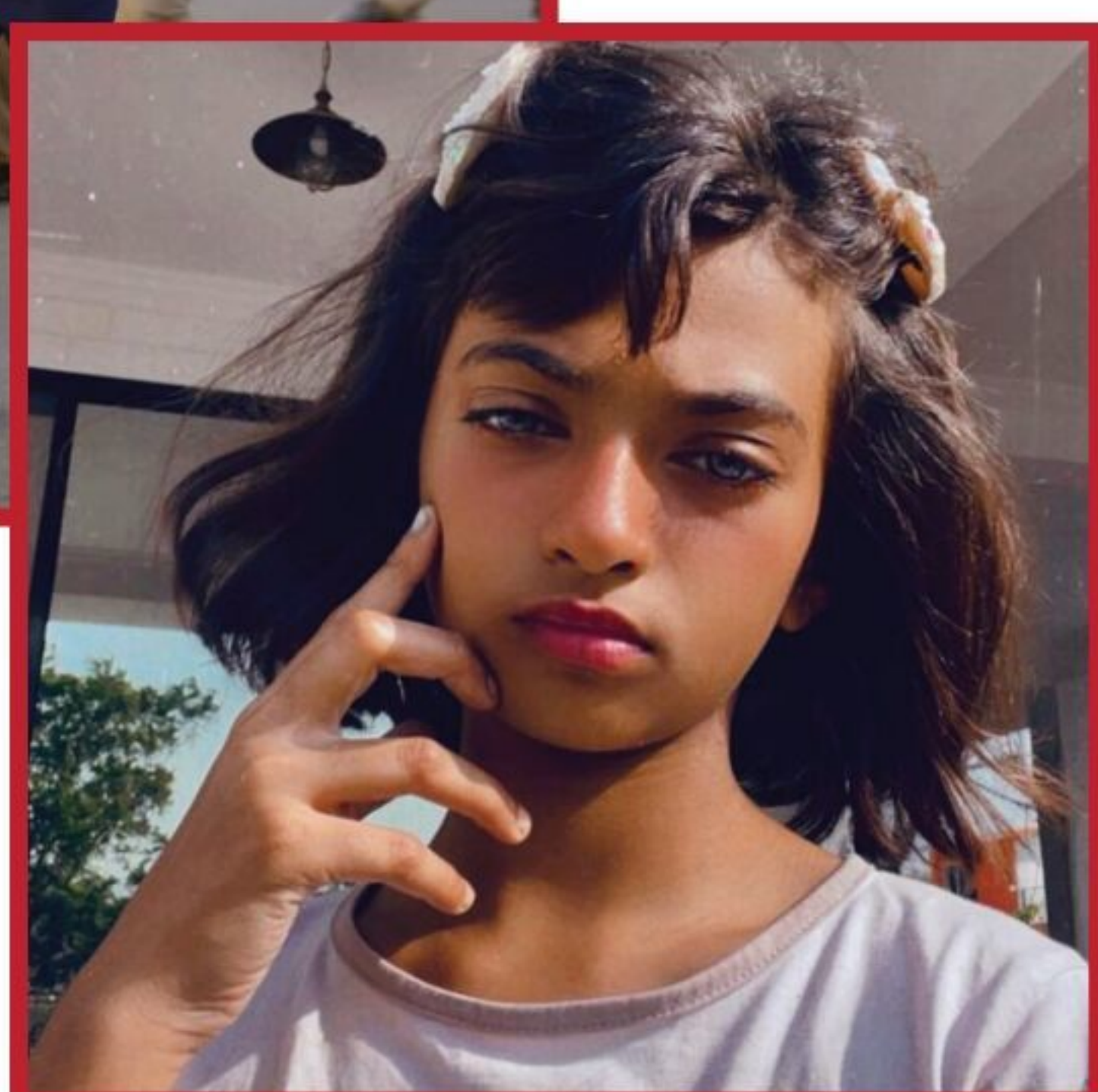
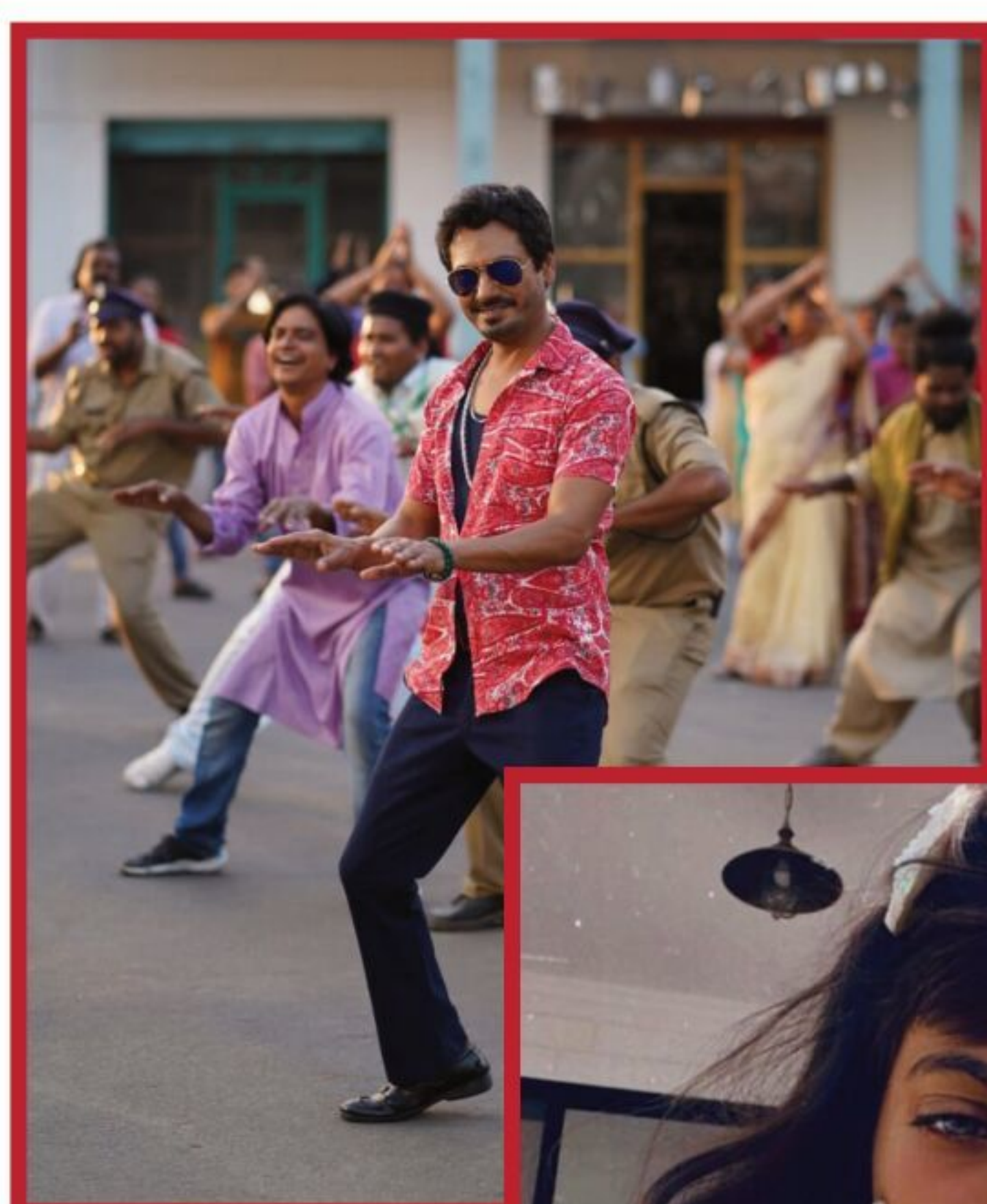
That's right... years ago when Kabir Bedi lived-in with his girlfriend Parveen Babi or when his former wife Protima Bedi ran naked on the beaches of Juhu, it was indeed a nine-days wonder. Reams and reams of ink and paper described these so-called scandalous events. Now-a-days, 55-year-old Milind Soman too ran in the buff in Goa and nobody raised an eyelid. But of course, the Goa cops weren't amused and booked him under an obscenity act.

Talking about Kabir Bedi, he's written his autobiography *Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Journey of an Actor* which is supposedly shockingly honest. He's talked about his open marriage with Protima Bedi, how Parveen Babi believed in sexual fidelity and how he was madly in love with her. Well, we sure can't wait to get our hands on the book to know more. By the way Kabir Bedi asked us for a particular cover of him and Parveen Babi. Not only that, he also sent us an old excerpt of one of our columns 'My Favourite Things' where he had filled up every column with Parveen's name. The Kabir and Parveen Babi romance sure must have been a torrid love story.





The pandemic sure has hit a pause button for the world. But Aditya Roy Kapur didn't let the virus hamper his intense workout regime for his next action film, 'OM' which will feature him in a fierce, never seen before avatar performing some deadly high octane action sequences. So what does Adi do? He has set up a gym in his house as well as in his farmhouse to not miss his workout sessions. How's that for dedication?



Nawazuddin Siddiqui has constantly amazed the audience with his stellar performances, now guess what... he's forayed into singing as well. Yes, the poor man's Irrfan Khan, Nawazuddin has come out with in his first-ever music video '*Baarish Ki Jaaye*' and guess what, his daughter Shora who looks exactly like her dad, shook a leg in her father's debut album '*Baarish Ki Jaaye*' too and the song has already hit a new milestone of 50 million just in a week.

Jaideep Ahlawat, known for his tough guy personas and intense characters that he pulls off with ease, was supposedly shell-shocked upon hearing the script of his latest film on Netflix - *Ajeeb Daastaans*. Shocking but true, Jaideep found the story complicated and extremely challenging and was totally bemused until director Shashank Khaitan explained the nitty-gritties to him, scene by scene. And then what? Jaideep aced it like he always does. Kudos to the man.

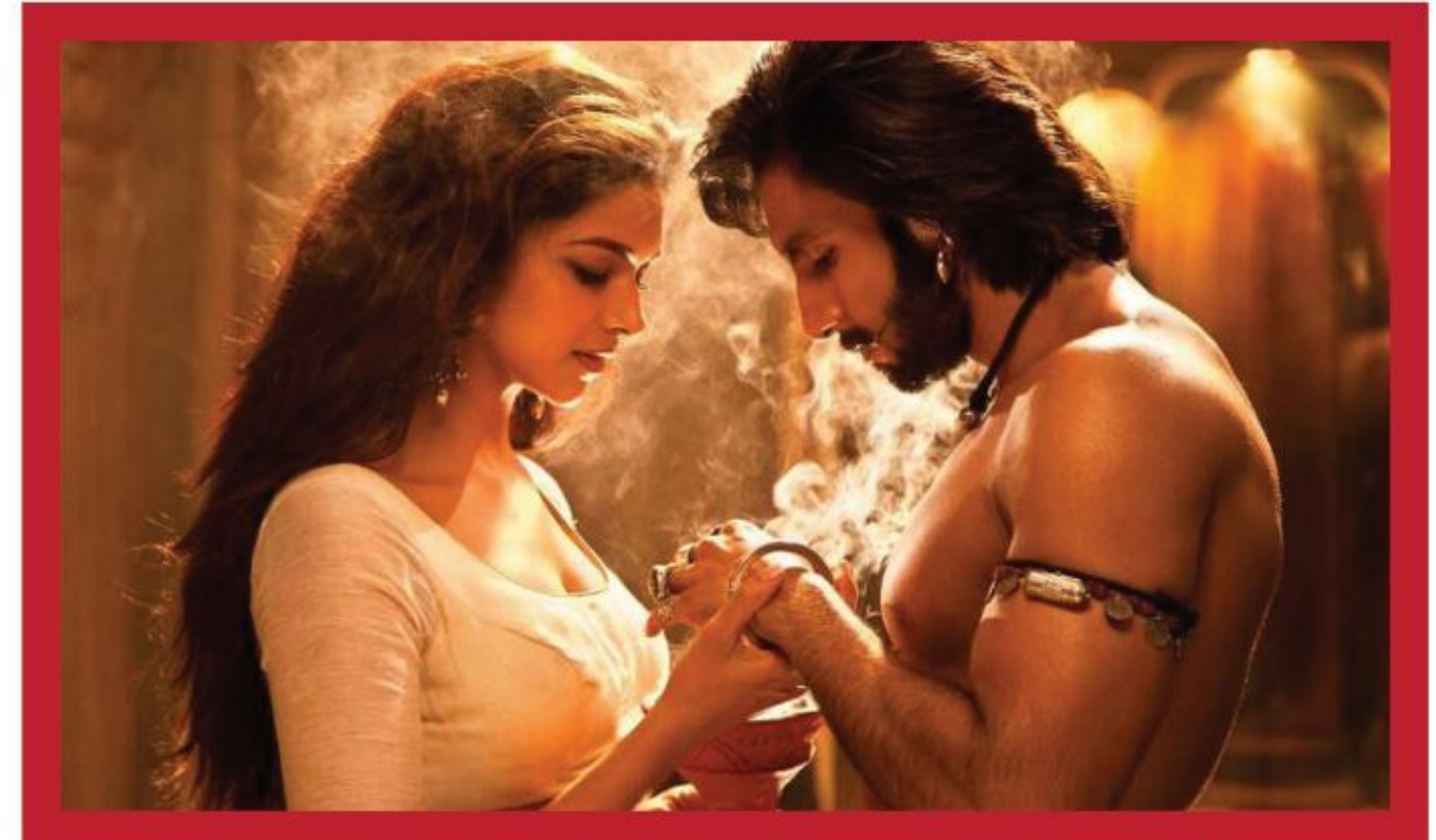






*Hathoda Tyaagi* of *Pataal Lok*, casting director and actor Abhishek Banerjee is a powerhouse performer. But guess what, he too found himself totally out of depth in Netflix's upcoming anthology film *Ajeeb Daastaans*. Why? Abhishek plays an *istreewala* and he has never used an iron in his life. So out he went to do his homework and watch all the *istreewala* on the sets to get a few tips. ...Guess that ironed out the problem.

There seems to be trouble brewing in Paradise. Well, we are talking about the alliance of Bhansali films with Eros International Media Ltd in relation to the Films *Goliyon Ki Rasleela- Ram Leela* and *Bajirao Mastani*. We received a mail from Bhansali Productions Private Limited stating, "We at Bhansali Productions Private Limited vide our advocates letter dated 5th April 2021, have terminated agreements with EROS International Media Ltd. in relation to the Films *Goliyon Ki Rasleela- Ram Leela* and *Bajirao Mastani*." Hmm, yet, another holy alliance grinds the dust!



Dia Mirza is glowing. And why not? She's sporting a baby bump and her happiness knows no bounds. However, hushed whispers slanderously insisted that the gorgeous actor was already preggie before her *band baaja* second *shaadi*. Dia however firmly put all that *gossip shossip* to rest by firmly penning a note denying the same. Dia, you should have just ignored it or is there something we don't know?

Spotted the *Dhak Dhak* lady, Madhuri Dixit Nene sunning in Maldives with her gorgeous family. Must say, she looked svelte and quite like the *Tezaab* heartbreaker that she had been, dressed in sexy shorts and off-shoulder gowns. Some people like wine just get better with age, na?







Siddhant Chaturvedi, another casualty of coronavirus, has recovered from it finally and has gone back to work pronto after testing negative. He has started shooting for his film *Yudhra* but unfortunately,

he's still in a bit of *khasta halat*. Poor guy, it seems to be quite an uphill task to recovery. Get well soon, Siddhant!

After banning director Sajid Khan for his alleged 'naughty' misdemeanours on the sets of *Houseful* which became the talk of the internet and kick-started the 'me too' movement, producer Sajid Nadiadwala has supposedly 'forgiven and forgotten' and is roping him in again to be the director of the *Awara Pagal Deewana* sequel. Bollywood sure has short term memories.



## Cat's Crown

This month goes to...

**Priyanka Chopra Jonas**

*who brought upcycled couture on to the red carpet at the BAFTAS. And she looked absolutely wow! In fact, the popular census was that nobody does the red carpet as well as Priyanka and Nick Jonas.*



# Has 'real' hero Sonu Sood out-raced and out-beaten all the 'reel' heroes?

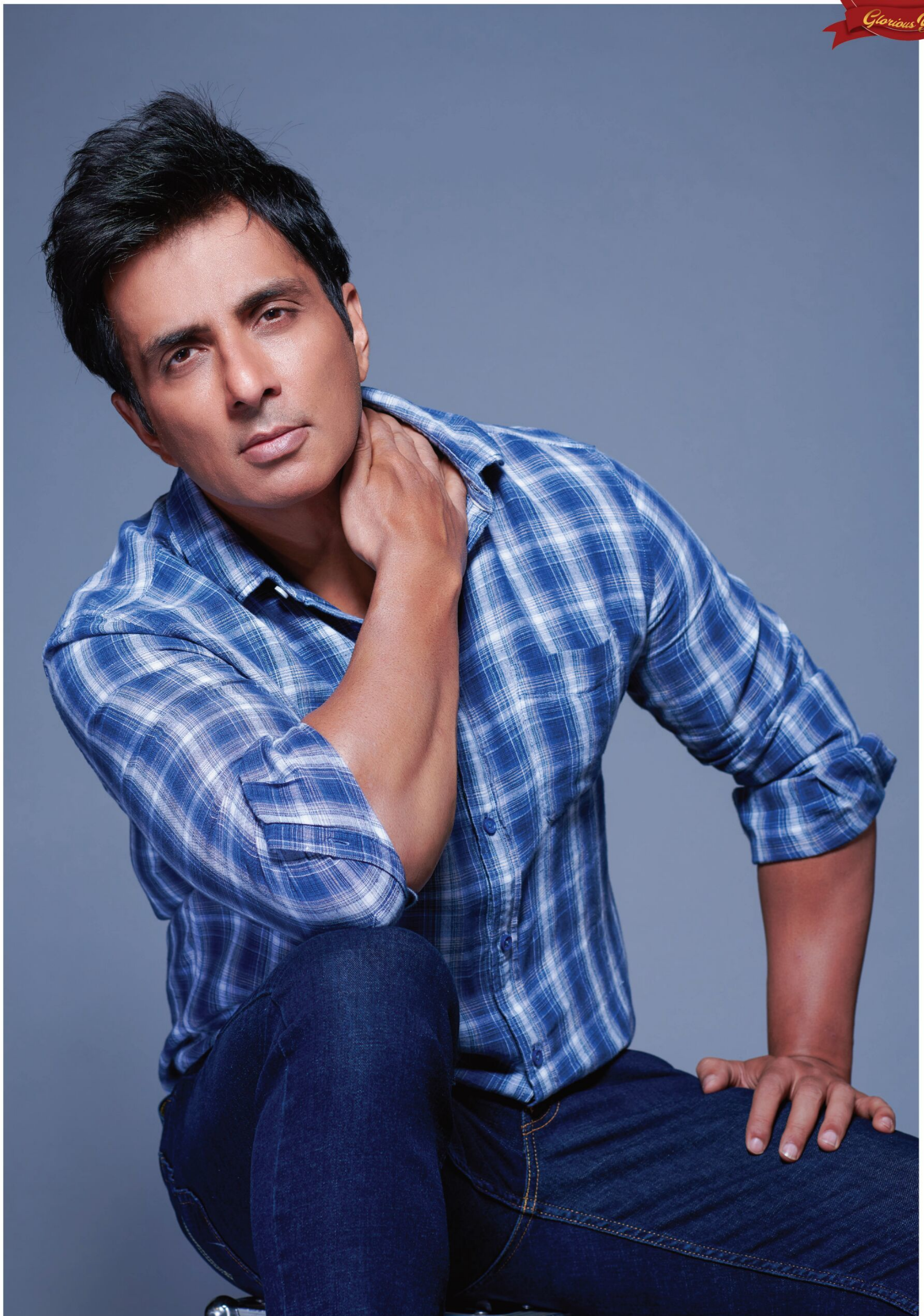
Is Sonu Sood stealing a march over the other heroes in Bollywood? In a candid interview, Sonu Sood tells **Sumita Chakraborty** why he doesn't care about name, fame and fancy titles of being 'biggest influencer' etc.

**H**e's humble, focussed and a man who believes in action rather than mere platitudes... proved by the phenomenal work he's done for the migrants. Not only that, even when naysayers pooh-poohed his work saying 'he's doing it just for publicity' or 'it's just a stepping-stone for politics', he quietly continued his good work even after the first wave of the pandemic ebbed.

Meet 'real' hero Sonu Sood who has stolen the lead over all the top actors merely on the basis of his stellar humanitarian work. He's been the first to create awareness for the need of vaccination during the second wave of the pandemic – standing tall as he got himself vaccinated and became the poster boy of the new age. His face is painted on the SpiceJet plane – a rare honour given for his fabulous social work. Indeed, Sonu Sood has single-handedly shown the path to help the needy even at the risk of his life.

Read on as Sonu talks about his work, stealing a march over other heroes and more.





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**Sonu, you have been hailed as the ‘messiah of migrants’ for your phenomenal work for the migrants and so many other charities, but you insist you are “no messiah” as per the title of your book... so how would you describe yourself?**

A lot of people started calling me messiah for the migrants when the whole movement started. I was providing jobs, medical help, education, safe passage for them ... and I was feeling very happy about it as I believed it was my duty to help them. When the pandemic struck, and I think everybody was clueless on how to help and what to do. I just want to thank God for guiding me right so that I was able to touch so many souls - and I thank God for all the love that I got from them - I couldn't have asked for anything more. They gave me this term ‘messiah’ and I would like to say that I'm no messiah. I'm just a common man who is blessed to touch those souls.

**You have always been humble, understated and a little shy of talking about your numerous social endeavours which you have been doing over the years, but the pandemic spotlighted your heroic work. What makes you take to charity... I know your parents were an inspiration for you - but what makes you take out time for these endeavours?**

I was always doing my bit whatever I could do. My mom and dad would always tell me that consider yourself successful only the day you are able to change a life. When you are able to do something for the needy who approaches you for help - and if you are able to change that life then consider yourself successful. So I always remember that and I always try to do whatever I can. During the pandemic, I feel there are lakhs and lakhs of people who got connected with me - I think it was almost seven-and-a-half lakh people who connected with me. And I was approachable to everyone. We could give scholarships to thousands of people and conduct close to 2,700 surgeries. So yes, this was something I never imagined I would be able to do but I'm glad I was a part of this.

**It is said that you are stealing a march over the other heroes because of your social endeavours. Do you think this is true?**

No, I'm not stealing anything from others - everybody is doing their bit. But I consider this as my job, my duty and I have to keep on continuing doing this. There are hundreds of people who come to my building every day. There are as many who come to my shoots and wait for me. And I think when they come with that kind of faith, there's a huge amount of responsibility on my shoulders and I have to do it. And I think it's everyone's duty to come forward and help the needy - it doesn't matter whether you're from Bollywood or from any other field. If you are capable of helping, do it; and it isn't that you should do this only on your birthdays or on special days; it's a 365 days job, spend at least an hour to help others.

**At the risk of your own life, you were the only Bollywood hero who jumped into the fray during the pandemic to help the migrants reach home safe and sound. Not a single tweet from the migrants went unanswered by you. What made you do this? How did the thought process start? What prompted this act?**

There was no thought process or anything. I never thought of the virus or anything. When I saw people crying on the roads with their little ones trying to go back to their families, I just acted spontaneously. It never ever crossed my mind that I would get affected - I just spontaneously jumped in to help. Yes, it was a huge risk and yes, I was scared for my family but there were billions of people who were waiting for my help so I made sure no tweet or no request went unanswered. There were almost one lakh tweets answered every single day. God guided me to do this and I took this as a responsibility and I'm glad I could do whatever I could do. Today, I believe that I came to Mumbai for this - not just to be an actor which has a shelf life but to help people, so I'm glad I was there.



**A lot of people think you are doing all this social work because you want to enter politics... What is your take on this?**

Let people say whatever they want... whether I want to enter politics or not. I've been offered tickets etc in politics since 10 years and if I was really keen I would have jumped into politics. But as an actor, I think I still have lots to do. I don't know what will happen after five or 10 years but I am entertaining people as an actor and doing whatever I'm doing. Whatever I have been able to do, I could do it because I was not associated with any party. I single-handedly was able to help the migrants and their prayers gave me the courage to do whatever I did.

**At any time during the pandemic, were you scared – you were meeting countless migrants, going from pillar to post to meet people to get help etc...**

No, I wasn't scared at any point. I was meeting 10-12 thousands – they used to sit in my cars, come to my place, the hotel I was staying, my house in Mumbai. But never did a single thought come into my mind to stop or that I would get affected. I used to start my work at 5:30 a.m. and the whole day I used to be on the roads, and then in the night from 12 till 3 a.m. I used to answer tweets. So who had the time to even think? It was a 24/7 job.







**Sonu, SpiceJet honoured your fab work by putting your face on their plane – a rare feat indeed. What is your reaction to it?**

...That was one of the most special things that I experienced in my life. I remember coming in a train on an unreserved ticket to Mumbai. And now I have my face painted on a plane and that is so special. I also saw the flight taking off and landing. It was surreal. A lot of people sent me videos and pictures of the flight in different location. I think it is very special and that makes me miss my parents more.

**This massive popularity – you have been called the Number one “real hero”, “biggest influencer” in India etc... do you think we can now call you the Number one hero in Bollywood?**

The massive popularity that you talk of or people calling me the ‘real’ hero or “biggest influencer”... these terms are too huge. I don’t know what to say but I’d like to say that I’m humbled and thankful! And it’s not just what I did but it was billions of people across the country who have been praying for me. They made me what I am today. When I came to Bollywood, I came to be an actor but making me a real hero or so-called No1 hero, it’s only thanks to the prayers of these people.





**We have never heard anything negative about you... no scandals, no hidden affairs, no controversies... Is there nothing negative or controversial about Sonu Sood?**

(laughs) I don't know if there's anything controversial about Sonu or not but like I said, I'm from a small town - Moga. I came with a lot of dreams in my eyes to make my parents proud. I lost my parents mid-way somewhere - my mom in 2007 and my dad in 2016 - I wish they could have seen whatever I have done in the past one-and-a-half years. They were very proud of me as an actor, but I wish they could have seen my work in the last year and a half, they would have been more proud. Also, I know they were my guiding angels and their prayers also did the trick for all I could do.

**What has been the driving force behind your career choices?**

The driving force in my career choices is the zeal to make my parents proud. Now they aren't there but I promise that people will say this is Sonu Sood, son of Shakti Sagar and Saroj Sood, and that has been my driving force in my career choice.

**You have had your share of hits and duds. How do you cope with failure?**

Yes, hits and flops are a part of an actor's life but what I experienced in my life in the last year and a half, films are just a very small fraction of what you actually experience in life. You expect your movie to do big business, but it is momentary, people will forget after some time. But when you touch a soul, it stays with you forever. The kind of happiness I get, getting a surgery done is more than any super-duper hit. I've been part of many super-duper blockbusters, but I swear what I experience when I bring a smile on an unknown face, I can't put in words. No huge movies or big hits can get you that satisfaction or happiness.

**What's the next project you will be doing?**

My next project is *Prithvi Raj Chauhan* for Yashraj. There is another film which will be called *Acharya*. There are two movies that I'm producing that will be in the pipeline and will start sometime in July or August this year.





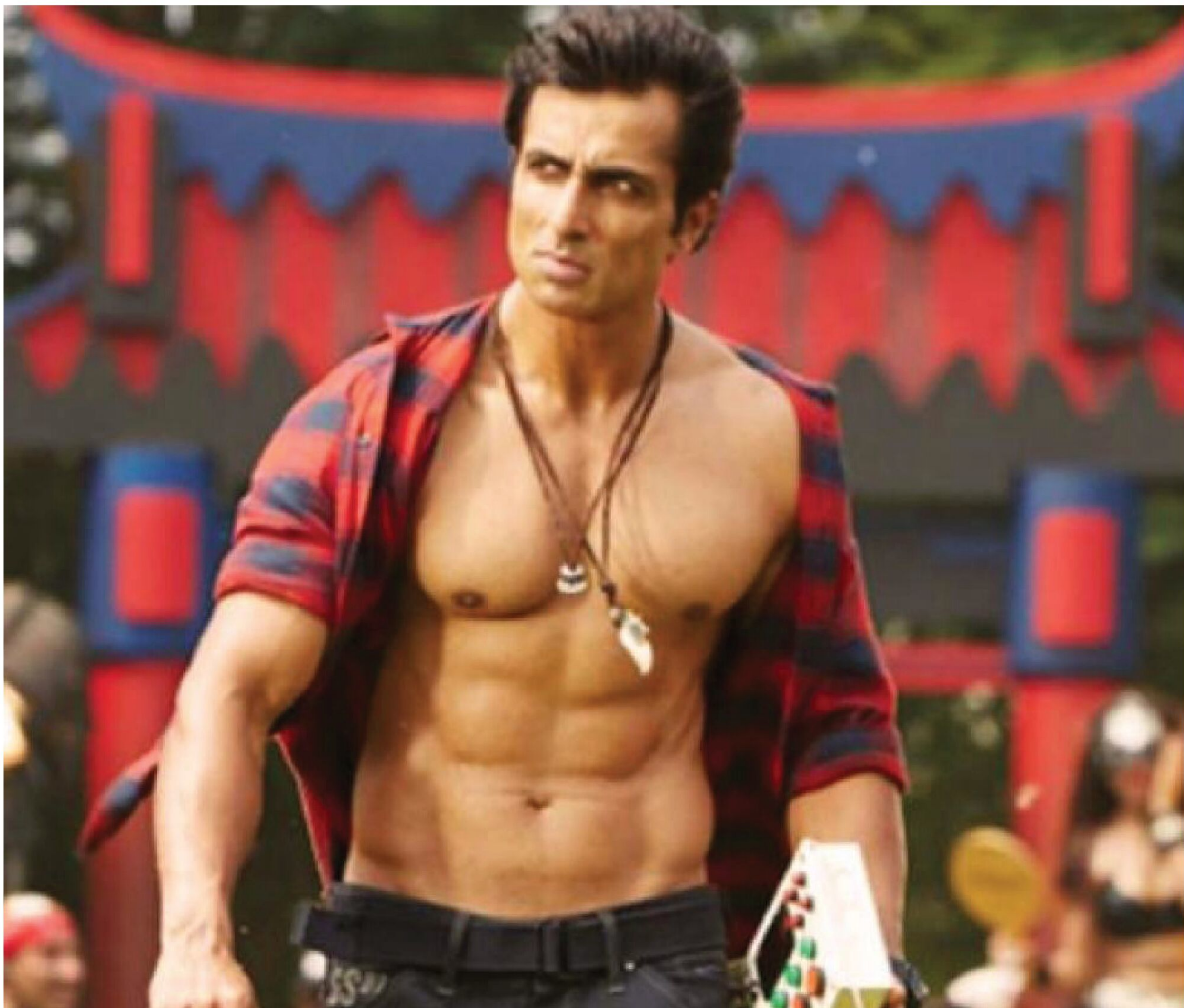
**What about the OTT field or international films?**

Yes, the OTT field is phenomenal but I'm still waiting for a good story to happen. There are lots been offered. But I'm waiting for a very good script and hopefully it will happen so. There are a couple of international film projects too in the pipeline. Right now, I'm reading scripts and some creative discussions are going on all across and I am hoping for the best. So, fingers crossed.

**Your sons are following in your footsteps... I read somewhere even your sons are into social work? Tell us about them?**

My sons are very inclined towards helping others. They have learned their lessons earlier than me I'd say, to help others and do social work. They get so many messages on their social media and they forward those messages to me. Sometimes, they tell me, 'Dad, someone is suffering from cancer or somebody is suffering from some other disease, can you help him?' They feel very happy to be the change. So I feel they are doing their bit and I wish that when they grow up, they also give back to society and this is the biggest achievement they can achieve to continue the journey of helping people.





I started Sood Charity Foundation to help the needy. I hope not now but even years later when people say that the pandemic had hit the country, Sonu Sood was there to give a helping hand. I'm hoping my kids will take the Sood Foundation forward and help many more people in need.

**The second wave of the pandemic is back again. How are you going to tackle it?**

We had already started the process of giving jobs... getting skilled development in villages, health and education care. When the first wave hit, we were still growing and was in the process of getting things done. But now everything is already set, so we already have assigned people to upskill people and get them the required jobs.

**Lastly Sonu, besides films and charity, what else do you dream of doing?**

Besides films and charity, I don't know what else I dream of... I get a high helping others. I have so many dreams. I want to have free bed hospitals across the country - at least 4000 to 5000 free bed hospitals across the country. I want to work on the education system where students get free scholarships and they achieve their dreams. I don't want any intelligent guy missing on the career front because of monetary problems. I want to give employment to a lot of people. I already have given employment to more than 2,00,000 plus people and many more to go... and I promise to touch almost 10 crore lives in the next five years. So that's my aim. My aim is to work hard to bring those smiles and change those lives that need help and I hope the prayers of millions are always with me.



# Poonam Khubani's Pick Of The Month



With all this brouhaha about remixes, originals and 're-inspired' films... the multi-talented Poonam Khubani, producer and melodious singer, picks 5 Bollywood films that have been re-inspired by Hollywood. Was the Bollywood version better? Or should the Hollywood original films not been touched at all? Read on...

## ***Dostana Inspired by Hollywood film Now I Pronounce You Chuck And Larry***

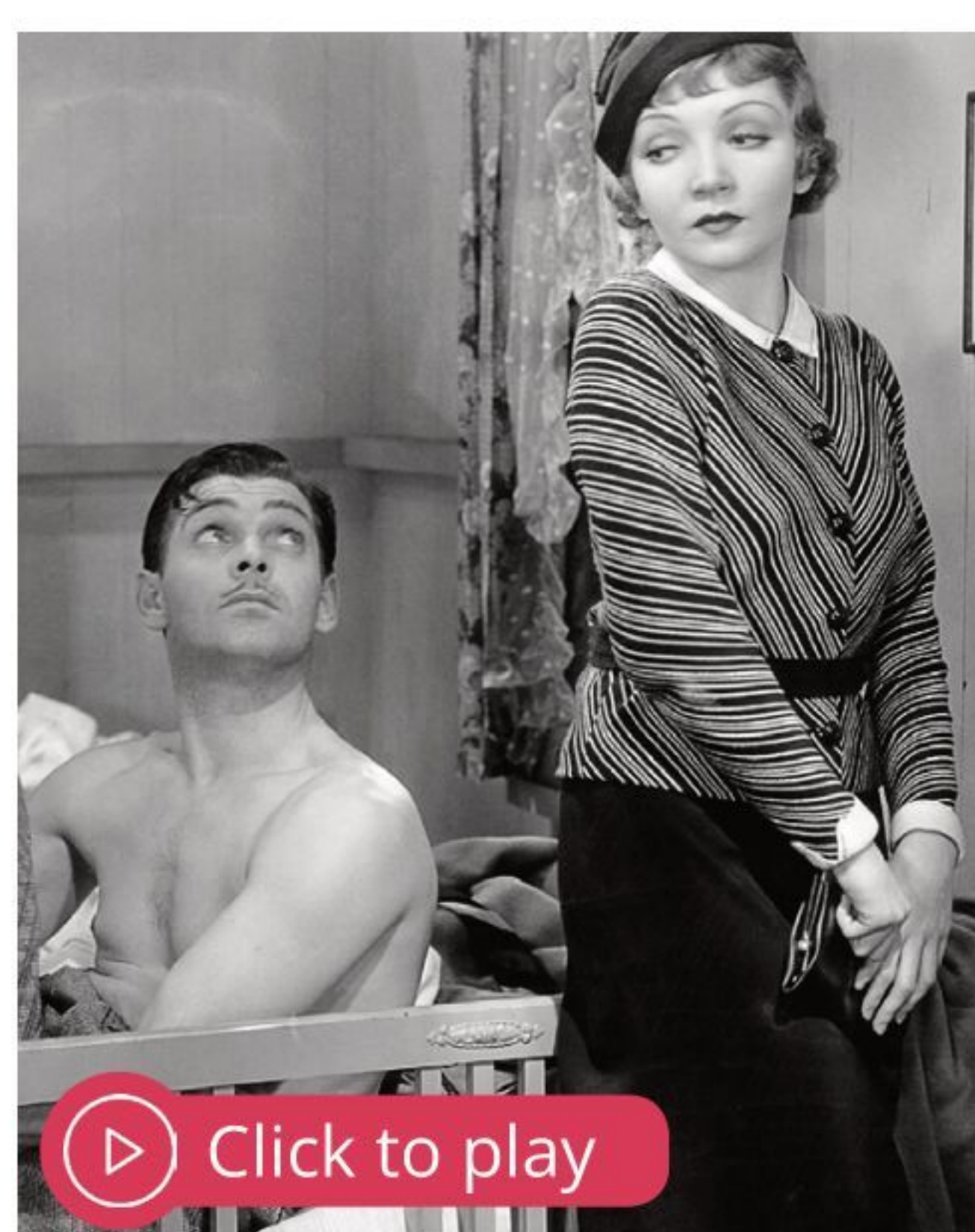
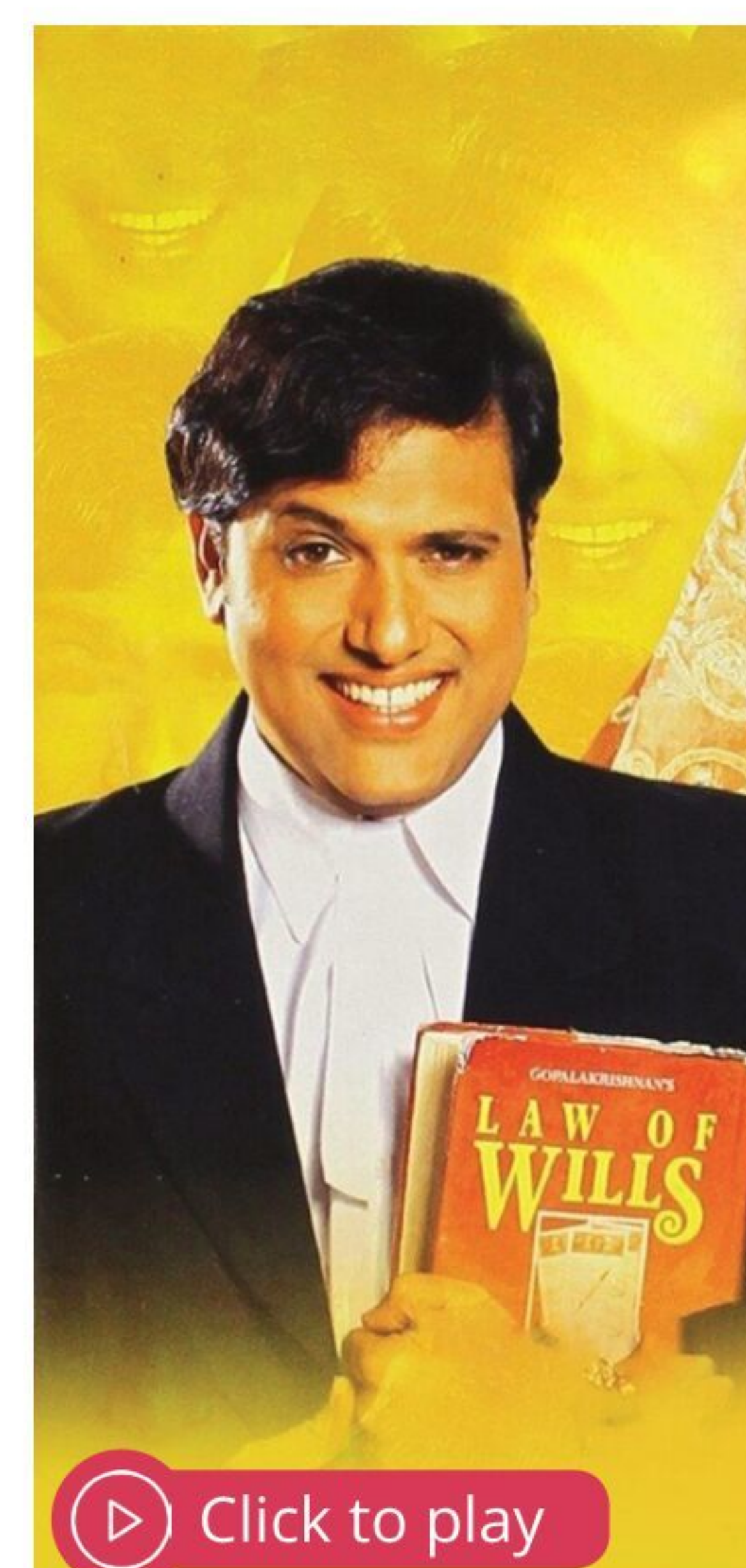
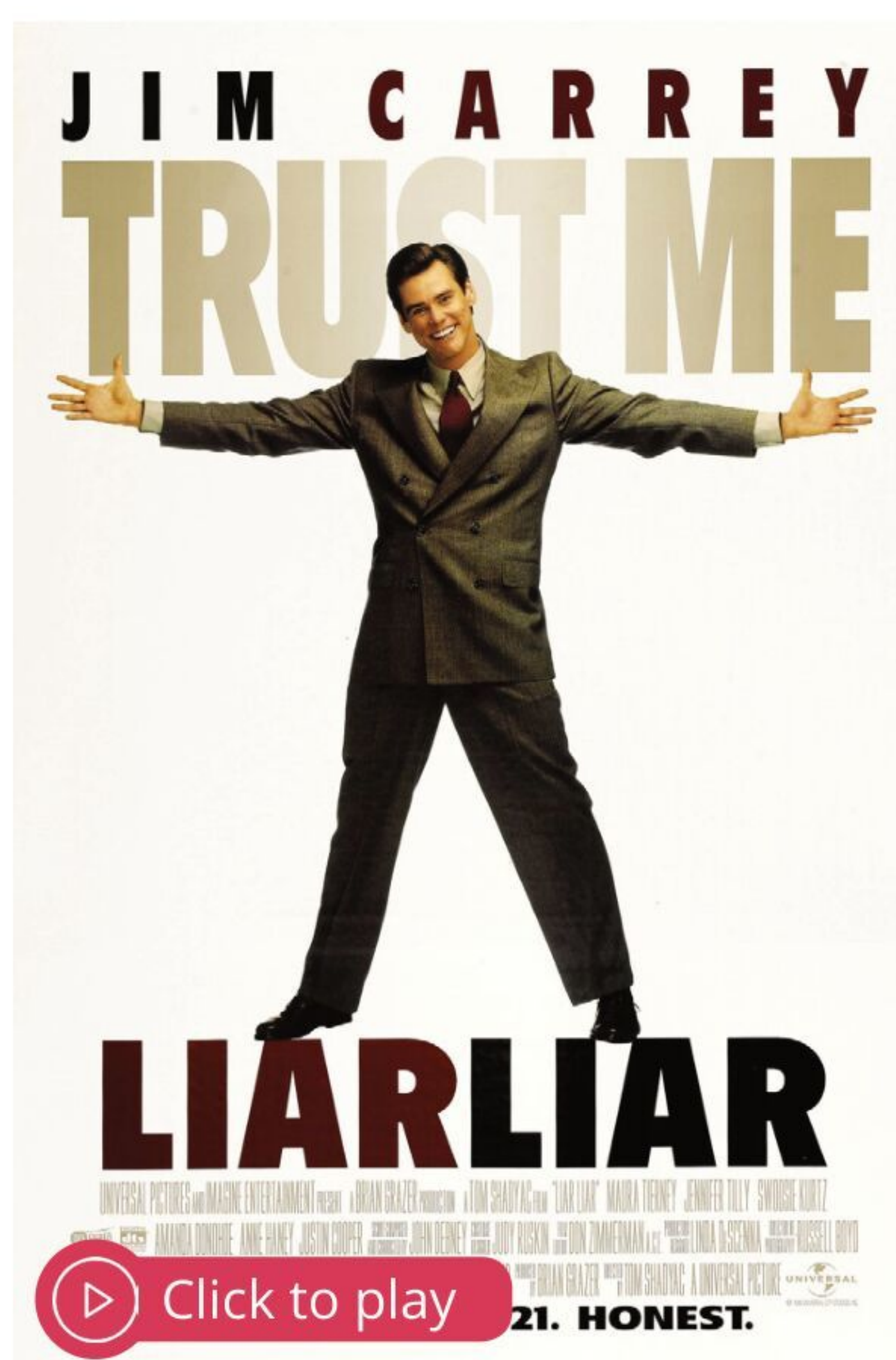
Everybody loved Dostana, the amazingly appealing Priyanka Chopra, John Abraham and Abhishek Bachchan starrer which was about two guys who pretend to be a gay couple in order to secure an apartment. It was slick, funny and touched a chord. Of course, the so-called love angle between the boys was treated in a very Bollywood way. Well supposedly, it has been inspired by Hollywood film Now I Pronounce You Chuck and Larry which had the same story line. Which was better? Well, Dostana was made very well but so was the Hollywood version. So I'd say both were good.





## Kyon Ki Main Jhut Nahi Bolta Inspired by Jim Carrey's Liar Liar

Do you remember Jim Carrey's iconic Liar Liar? It was a laugh-a-thon. Kyon Ki Main Jhut Nahi Bolta starring Govinda was Bollywood's version of Liar Liar. Both the films are about a lawyer who is adept at telling lies to the point, everything he says is a lie. But then he is cursed by his son to only speak the truth every time he opens his mouth to say anything, which turns his crooked life upside down. Though Govinda was very good, the film got moderate success and of course, Jim Carey is the guru of comedy so his was definitely a hard act to follow.

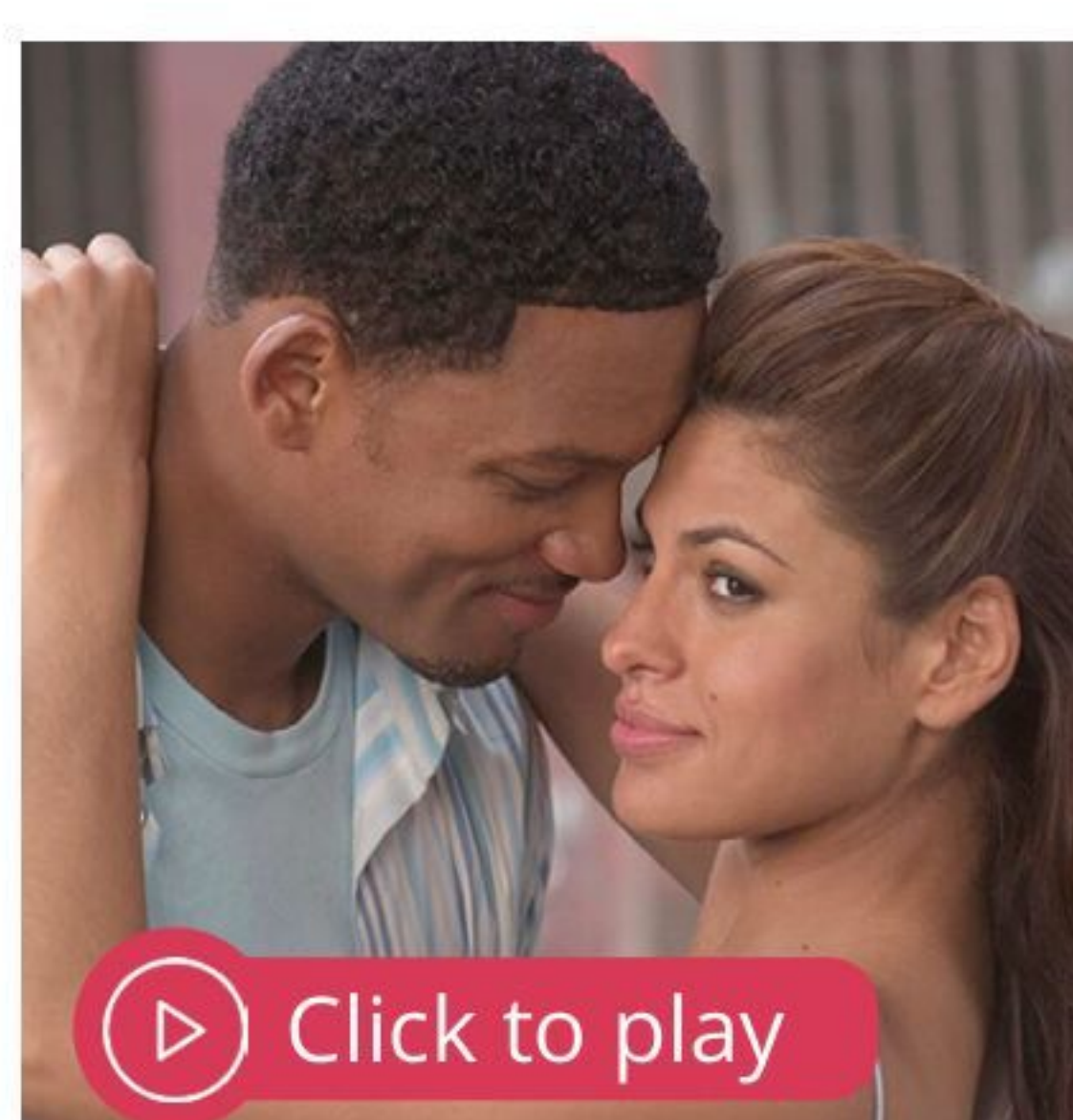
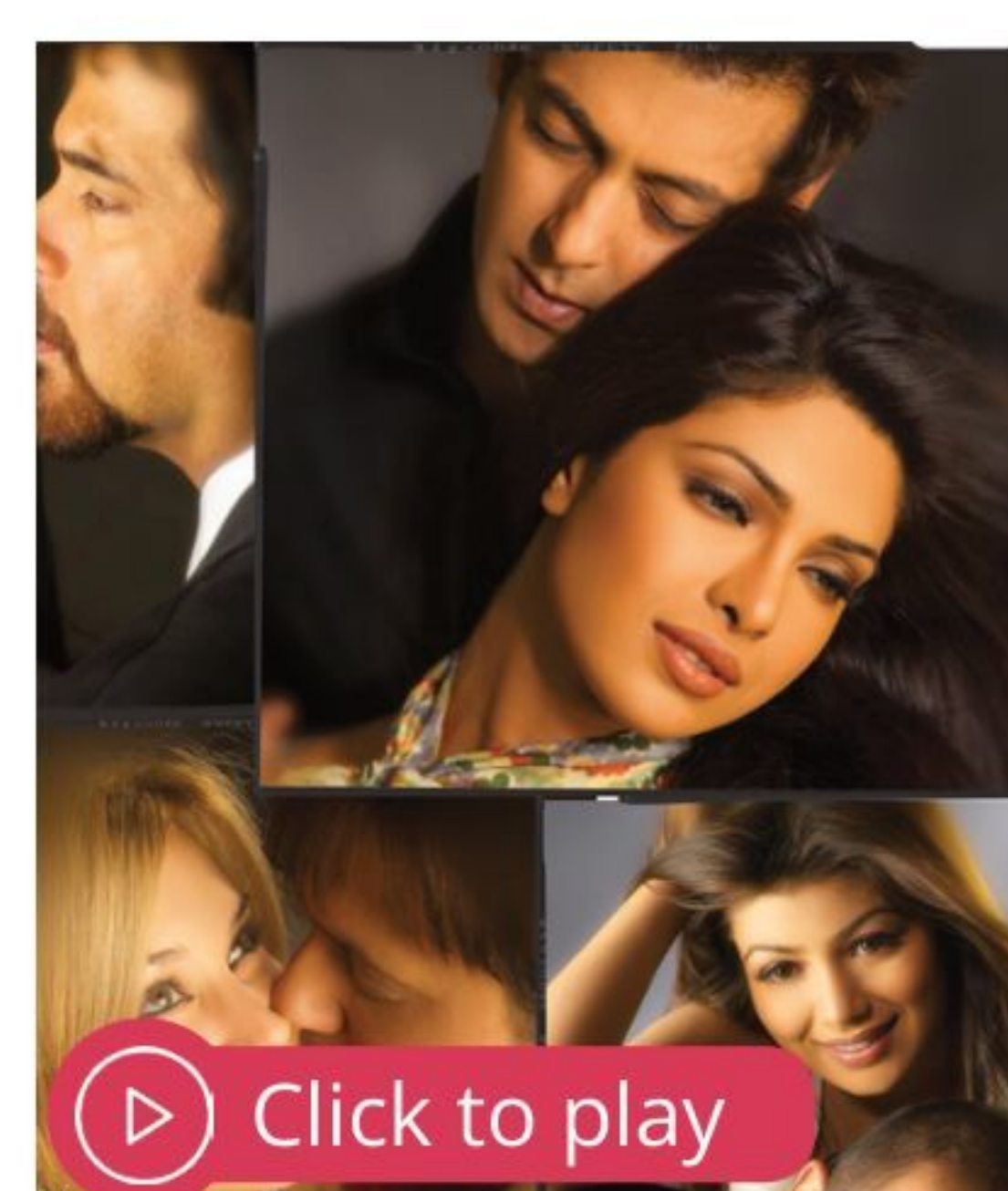


## Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahi Inspired by It Happened One Night

Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahi starring Aamir Khan and Pooja Bhatt and directed by Mahesh Bhatt was the romantic film of the '90s. People just loved it especially the wonderful pairing of Pooja Bhatt and Aamir Khan. But it was inspired by the Hollywood film It Happened One Night which too was a huge hit. Both the films were great.

## Salaam-e-Ishq inspired by Love Actually

Very romantic – Salaam-e-ishq starred Salman Khan, John Abraham, Govinda, Akshay Khanna, Anil Kapoor and so many others. It was very romantic. So was Hollywood film Love Actually Both movies had couples who were facing problems in their relationships, and each story of each couple is, linked to the others. The only difference was the number of couples in the movies – everything else was the same. Both had their own flavour so thumbs up for both.



## Partner Inspired by Hitch

Gosh, at one point, Govinda and Salman Khan starrers were so popular. Partner too had a unique flavour and the comic timing of Govinda and Salman Khan was phenomenal. It was a huge hit. But do you know it was inspired by the Hollywood film Hitch? Both the movies have a man who is hopeless in finding love and he consults a professional date doctor who helps salvage his love life. Both were very good.



WILL THE PANDEMIC  
**CRIPPLE**  
THE FILM INDUSTRY?



**Top actors have tested positive for Covid-19, big budget films like Sooryavanshi and Thalaivi have been postponed and cinema halls have shut down again... Sumita Chakraborty wonders if the pandemic has made the future of Bollywood rather bleak?**

It's kind of serious when Bollywood's fittest actor tests positive for Covid-19 and is hospitalised. That's right, we are talking about Akshay Kumar who tested positive followed closely by Vicky Kaushal, Katrina Kaif, Bhumi Pednekar to so many more who have all taken to social media to announce that they tested positive. Not just this, supposedly, 45 members who were supposed to start work on Akshay Kumar-starrer Ram Setu have also contracted the virus. The

pandemic has snaked in rather close into Tinsel Town... and how! So much so that most shootings have been stalled or postponed.

2020 was a bad year for Bollywood - what with the lockdown, closing of theatres and shootings being stalled. Life changed drastically for Tinsel Town as the new norm took over the glitz 'n' glam of the past, bringing the industry to a rude standstill.



However, in June 2020 when the production of films resumed after a three-month long hiatus, there was an overall sigh of relief all over. However, now things are back to square one especially after the imposition of stringent restrictions in Maharashtra in the wake of the rise in coronavirus cases.

Indeed, a big blow to the industry more so when Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced a weekend lockdown and night curfew in Maharashtra till April 30 in the wake of rising corona cases.

The film industry already reeling under major losses for the past year again, was further shell-shocked as the films that were finally being released were again stalled. Kangana Ranaut's ambitious film *Thalaivi* which was all set to release on April 23, 2021, was stalled almost immediately. The makers of *Thalaivi* took to Twitter to announce that they have postponed

the release of the film due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the country, which was a big blow not only to the makers but also the actors especially Kangana Ranaut who was banking on this film to bag more awards and acclaim.



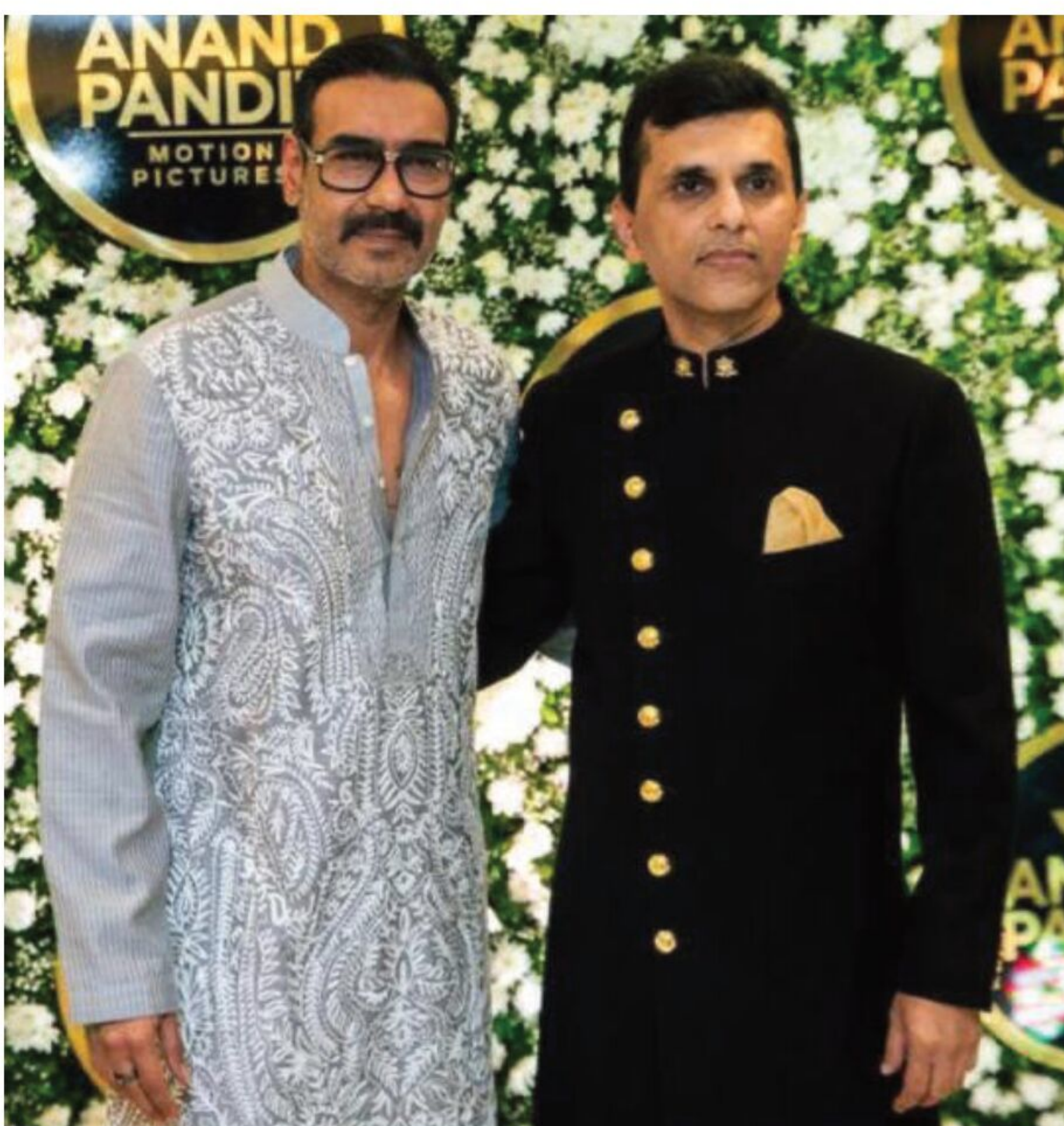




The latest developments further led to the postponement of more big budget movies including Akshay Kumar-starrer Sooryavanshi, which was scheduled to release on April 30 - no new date has been announced as of yet - another casualty of the pandemic. Likewise, news filtering in speak about more films being postponed till further notice. New films were being canned and old films being shot have ground to a halt. Obviously, the worst hit were the producers, directors and technicians. In fact, according to a news report,



BN Tiwari, President of Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), has even approached actor Salman Khan for help. He said in a newspaper report, "We have been trying our best to look after the requirements of our workers in the Indian film industry. We have even approached Salman Khan. We have shared the details of our workers with him. He is one of the most humble actors... he had helped our workers last year too. I am sure he will also help this time." Furthermore, Tiwari and other members of FWICE have requested the state government to set up vaccination centres in Film City. "Due to curfew and restricted work







shifts, it would be difficult for workers to travel outdoors to get vaccinated. Hence, I request the concerned authorities to set up vaccination centres in Film City too." Supposedly, Yash Raj Films has decided to bear vaccination cost of their workers.

Besides this, strict standard operating procedures (SOPs) have also been designed for the shooting units across India. Added Tiwari, "We have devised strict SOPs for all the shoots. We will make sure no shoot commences without RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction). Large shoot shall be avoided. We will also take strict actions against violators."

But is that enough? The pandemic has hit the film industry in a big way. Yes, they have opted for the OTT to release their films. Like Anand Pandit, producer of The Big Bull, avers, "Yes, we had to push the theatrical release of the film because of the covid problem and we were not left with any other option expect coming on the OTT Platform. Since Ajay and I were in touch with

Disney+Hotstar, we decided mutually to go for an OTT release." But again, the huge margin of profits seen by the film industry earlier has whittled to just marginal profits. A fact that has even made many in the OTT domain stay away from big budget films like MX Player. MX Player CEO Karan Bedi avers, "We took a call very early that economically releasing films on our OTT platform was not working for us because of the cost of acquiring a film and making up the difference of what the producer would have tried to do in the theatre."



And very rightly so... However, in all this, the film industry has been the biggest losers in the wake of the pandemic. Will this continue? Will they recover their losses or will the pandemic cripple the film industry and make it a ghost of what it was... a magnificent world of glitz and glam?



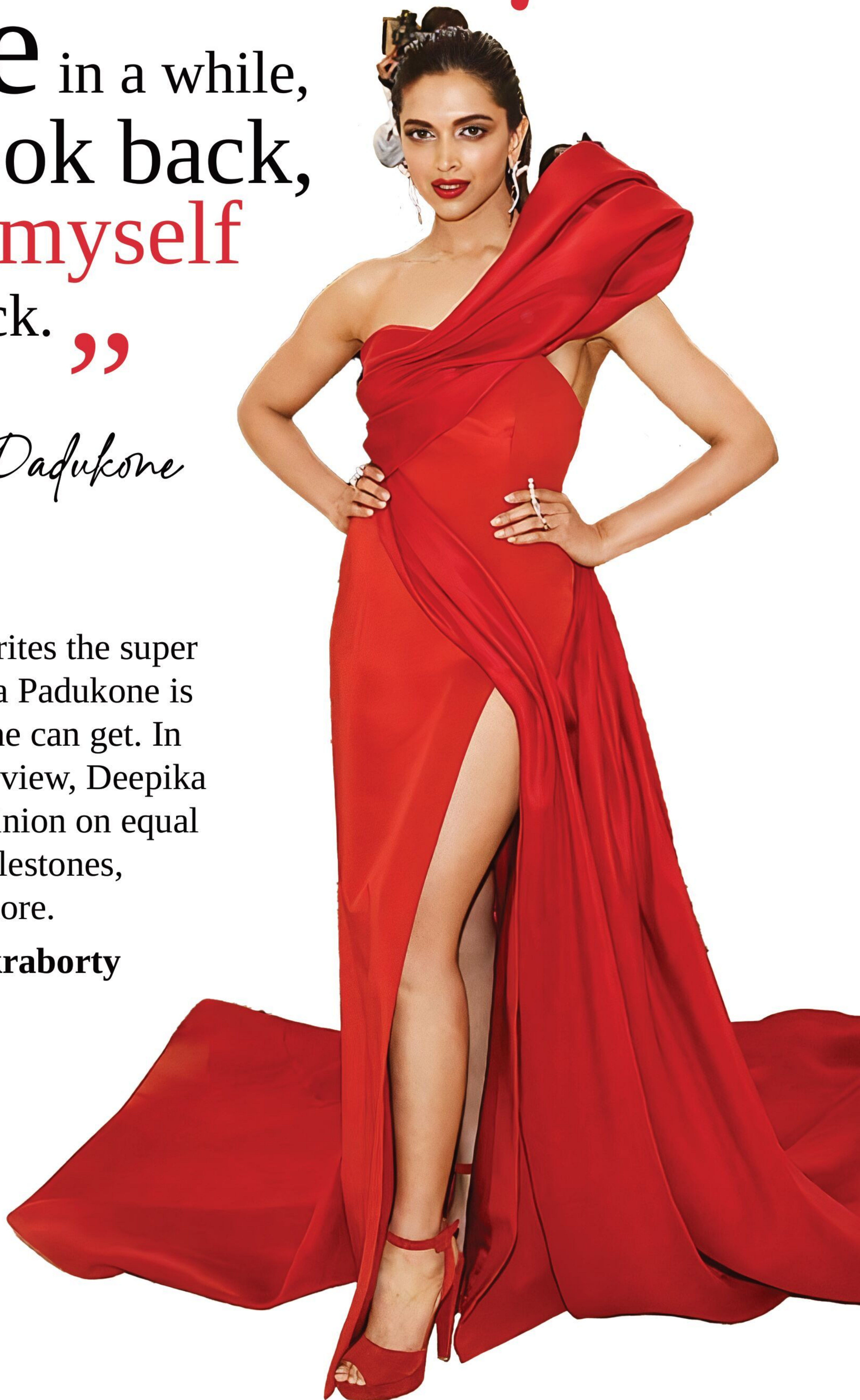
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Once in a while,  
I do look back,  
and **pat myself**  
on the back.”

— *Deepika Padukone*

One of our favourites the super gorgeous Deepika Padukone is as articulate as one can get. In a throwback interview, Deepika elucidates her opinion on equal pay, her many milestones, adversities and more.

**By Sumita Chakraborty**





**You've gone from strength to strength, conquered all kinds of adversities and challenges with a lot of dignity, and have reached the top. When you look at your journey, how do you feel?**

Honestly, I am actually not the kind of person who looks behind and clings to the past. I don't do post-mortems on what I have done or got. I think being an athlete has taught me to always look ahead.

**"I am actually not the kind of person who looks behind and clings to the past."**

Yes, of course, I do think back at times but only in a positive way. You learn from all the good things you've done and see how you can do things better. And if one has made any mistakes along the way, you also try and rectify them or reflect on them. But then again, I don't dwell on the past too much - whether it's the good or the bad. It's actually a conscious decision that I've made to always stay in the present and not think too much about the future - maybe the immediate future, yes, but not into the horizon. I'm someone who is learning too. I wouldn't say I do it in the best way yet. But I do try!

But I always live in the moment and in the present. Although I do feel it is necessary to look back and appreciate what I've achieved. So once in a while, I do look back, and pat myself on the back. I think one should cut oneself some slack, So, I guess I am doing that as well.

**Fabulous, Deepika, you've conquered Bollywood - you're the topmost actress at the moment. You've also cemented your name in Hollywood, and even been heralded as one of the world's highest paid actresses. Everything you touch is turning into gold. What's the secret?**

(Laughs) Honestly, I don't think there is any secret. If there is any so-called mantra that I always follow or live by is what my father always told me as a young girl. He said, 'Just focus on enjoying what you do and do what you're enjoying. And everything else will follow'. And honestly, I think what drives me is my passion for my work, my passion to excel in everything I do. For me, being mediocre is not okay.







**“I’ve had my set of challenges or shortcomings that I’ve had to work on and overcome.”**

When I take on something, I like to give it my best and I think being driven by creativity and challenges, works for me! And speaking of Hollywood, let me say, I am not charmed by Hollywood, I am charmed by creativity.

**Some people think success has been served on a silver platter to you. You were a supermodel, once you stepped into stardom, you became a super actress, your journey seems too easy... What do you have to say about that?**

Well, I would beg to differ. I’d say only the people who are on that journey will understand what my journey is about. This is actually some-





thing new that I've heard. I think people are aware of the fact that it hasn't been easy. I think everyone has their struggles and everyone has to work hard in different ways, different aspects, and avenues to achieve what they want to achieve. In my case, my journey is very different from what somebody else's path or journey has been. I've had my set of challenges or shortcomings that I've had to work on and overcome. ... And maybe some challenges... I am still working on.

**You've been listed as the one of world's richest actress by Forbes. How do you feel about that?**

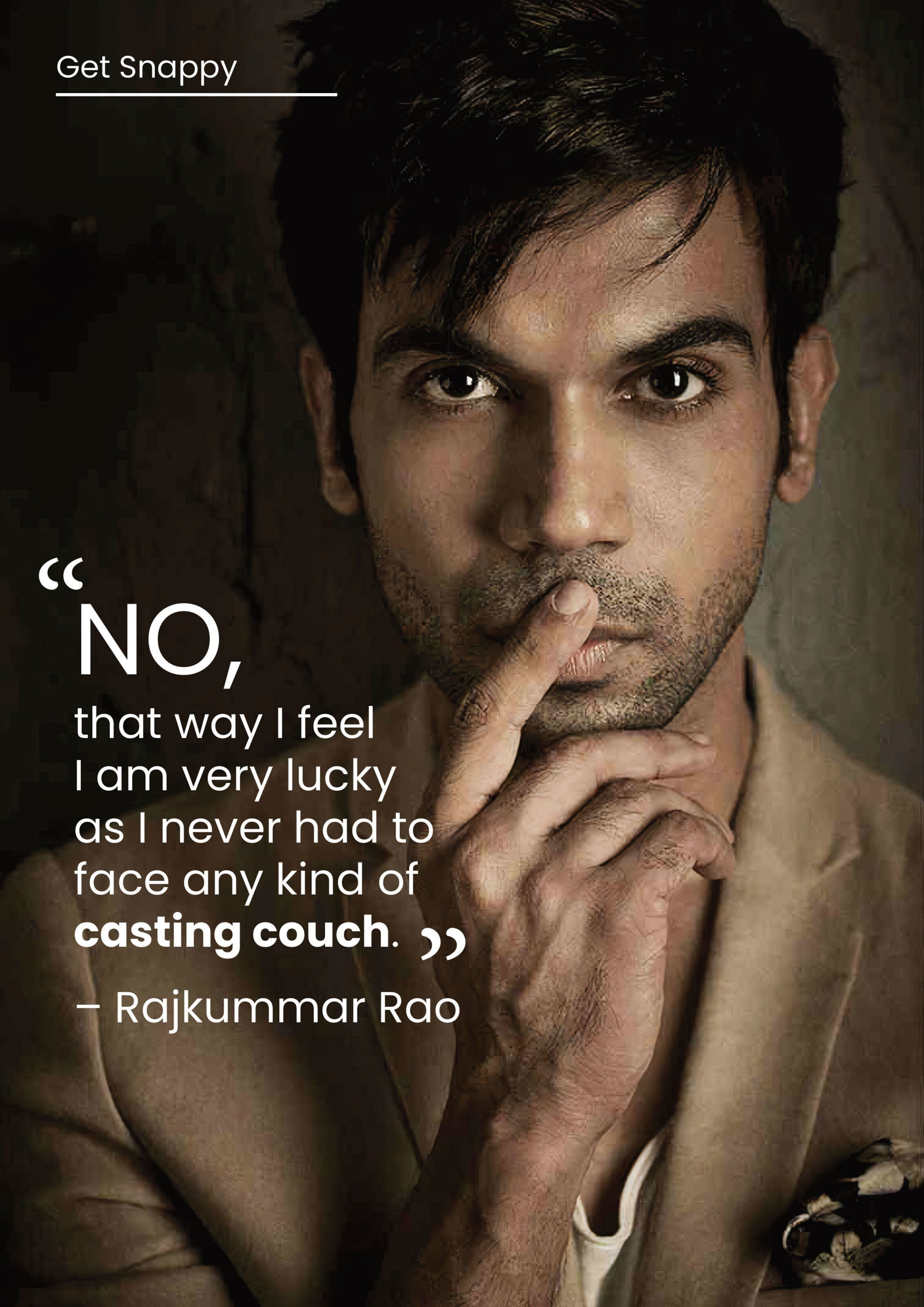
(Laughs) Let me put it this way. I do feel a sense of... I'd say gratification or a sense of accomplishment. But at the same time, I am also happy that it is not a result of something

**"At a time when equal pay or equal wage is something that is so spoken about, so this kind of validation is extremely important to me."**

that I focused my energies towards. If that was my ambition, then I'd be like, 'Okay, that's what I focused my energies towards and the result is this!' And I think that I just went about doing what I believe in or what I enjoy doing the most - and something like (being listed by Forbes) was not even on my radar. But it's important this sort of financial validation happens. When I say validation, it's because it is so necessary especially at a time when equal pay or equal wage is something that is so spoken about, so this kind of validation is extremely important to me. I am not going to brush it aside, or not acknowledge it. Of course, I am going to own it and acknowledge it.

But I appreciate the fact that it has happened as a result of my work and not as a result of focusing only on that.





Get Snappy

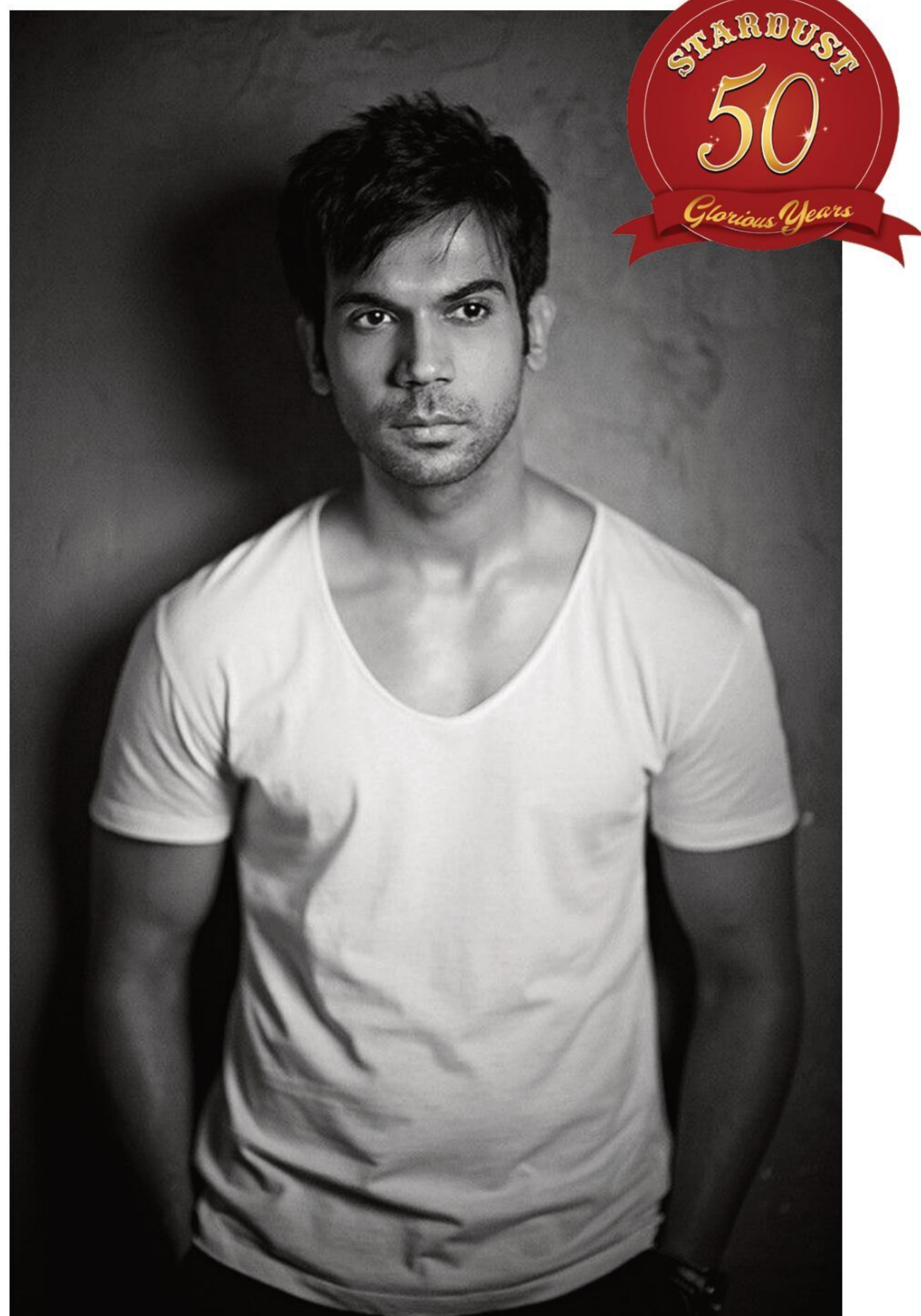
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“**NO,**  
that way I feel  
I am very lucky  
as I never had to  
face any kind of  
**casting couch.**”

– Rajkummar Rao



**Rajkummar Rao is like a chameleon – give him any role or character, and this performer par excellence transforms into that persona almost instantly. Arguably, one of the best actors amongst the NewAge stars, he has raised the bar with each performance of his. And, how! In a throwback interview, he talks to Sumita Chakraborty about his struggle, making it big and more.**



**You are an industry outsider who stormed Bollywood with path-breaking roles and fabulous performances. How would you describe your journey?**

My journey has been long, challenging yet extremely interesting. Honestly, I feel very blessed that I'm a part of this industry. Perhaps it's because of my family's love and blessings, and of course, the hard work that I've put in – be it in Delhi, film school days or in Mumbai... whatever it is, it has really worked for me. Sometimes I wonder, why me? ... Because we all know that there are so many people who come to the city with the same dream, but some go back with broken dreams and broken hearts. So that way I feel very blessed that I have been accepted by the industry despite being an industry outsider. In that way, my journey has been so wonderful. It's been a learning curve, actually. I got a chance to work with some really amazing people and some marvellous filmmakers. I've learnt such a lot and definitely, I feel like I have grown as an actor. Since my first film to now, because of the kind of people that I've worked with,



I've picked up so much especially from my team and my film friends. It has enriched me as an actor. Of course, I still have a long, long way to go but yes, the journey upto now has been interesting. There must have been a lot of challenges that you've faced. Could you talk about them? There were huge challenges then and of course, there still are challenges and there are different ways in which I faced those challenges. When I was starting out, I really struggled. I had to look for work for almost one-and-a-half to two years. There were numerous rejections, and there were times when I felt down and out, but during these trying times, it was very necessary to keep myself motivated, to keep myself inspired and to keep going. Failure can make you slip down yet you have to pick up yourself. In life, of course, there will be rejections, there will be negativity around you. But you can't let these things hamper your dedication or your love for what you are doing. So during my struggle, I made sure that I stayed motivated. I would try and learn new things. I would look at other actors, and

**"Despite the rejections, I would keep going for auditions etc."**







I would try and learn from them, learn more about the art. I would get myself enrolled into some good acting workshops, hone my skills. And more importantly, I made sure that the challenges weren't getting the better of me. Despite the rejections, I would keep going for auditions etc. In life, it is necessary not to let anything pull you down.

**You know Rajkummar, when you say 'struggle', I've spoken to Ranveer Singh about his journey and he had told me about a lot of casting couch incidences that happen even for men. Have you by any chance faced the casting couch?**

No, that way I feel I am very lucky as I never had to face any kind of casting couch. I'm sure it happens with boys as well but in my

**"Acting was the only thing I fell in love with and the only thing I dreamt of."**

case, I've never experienced it. It has been a slow and steady ride for you, at any point did you ever think of giving it up? No, because I never had a plan B. Acting was the only thing I fell in love with and the only thing I dreamt of. My dream was to be a film actor and there was no chance that I could give it up. I knew nothing but acting. So I kept on... and here, I am!

**At any point did you feel that you wouldn't be accepted in any particular kind of a role?**

I can't overthink whether I'll be accepted or not! I can't work like that honestly. As an actor I want to push my limits. I want to explore all kinds of genres, I want to do different characters. I don't want to restrict myself thinking that I should not be doing this or probably be doing only a particular role and then would be accepted. You have to take your chances, keep pushing your boundaries and that's exactly what I do.





“Whenever I finish shooting,  
I never say ‘**it’s a wrap**’...  
because I truly believe that  
**there are so many stories**  
out there, and yet so less a time  
to tell them.”

– **Shashant Shah**

The amazingly talented director of *Chacha Vidhyak Hain Humhare Season 2* and so many other webseries and feature films, Shashant Shah tells **Sumita Chakraborty** why as a director, he is never scared of failure and more...

He is indeed a very fine director – and has directed every genre – from comedy, masala, thrillers to even courtroom dramas. In fact, according to a survey done by a website, out of seven best Zee5 original movies and web-series listed, two of the web series were directed by him... *The Chargesheet: Innocent or Guilty?* and *The Verdict – State VS Nanavati*.







**M**eeet the understated Shashant Shah who lets his amazing work do the talking. And talk it does – for practically all his films from *Dasvidaniya* to *Chalo Dilli* - and webseries *The Chargesheet: Innocent or Guilty?*, *The Verdict – State VS Nanavati*, *Jamia 2.0* to *Chacha Vidhyak Hain Humhare Season 2* have been critically acclaimed. Read on as this multi-talented director talks about his films and webseries, shoots, multi-talented writer wife Aarti and two handsome sons and much more...

**Shashant, how has the journey been - from doing TV, acclaimed films including *Dasvidaniya*, *Chalo Dilli* and *Bajatey Raho* to now making slick web series for some of the best OTT platforms, directing films to much more?**

I've never sat back and thought about my journey, honestly because I don't think I have the time. I just move on to my next story.

When I look at the works of Sir Satyajit Ray or Frank Darabont, I feel that they are so relevant even today. I am not even a particle of dust in terms of their body of work. So I really have a lot to do and so instead of thinking back and looking at my journey, I prefer to go onto my next film/story instead.

**Shashant, you made *The Verdict – State VS Nanavati*, tell us about this? Also, I wanted to ask wasn't *The Verdict's* story very similar to *Rustom*?**

I met Subhash Kapoor Sir, who said in his calm voice that they want me to direct "*The Verdict*" which was based on the infamous Nanavati Case. My first reaction was that the film *Rustom* has already been made. Subhashji told me to read the script (10 episodes) and then decide. I picked up the script and I started reading - and I didn't put the script down until I read the fourth episode. And then I realized it was different and I knew I should be a part of something like this because I knew that this is going to make me learn a lot. You have to be blessed as a filmmaker to get a chance to shoot pe-

riod dramas. I knew this would make me challenge myself as a filmmaker because earlier my films were all about slice a of life – *Dasvidaniya* or comedy – *Chalo Dilli*. I thanked my stars that I was blessed to get this offer. I was extremely happy and I said, let's jump into it. So I just told him, I want a lot of pre-production time. They told me, fine, you will get two and a half months of pre-production time. So with the help of my Team, My DOP- Mohan-na Krishna, Production Designer- Wasiq Khan, Sound Designer- Shahab Alam, Makeup Stylist- Arun Gire and Costumes Stylist – Preeti we made the series under the guidance of Subhash Kapoor and Ekta Kapoor.

**At any point, were you scared that comparisons would be made?**

I will tell you something very frankly – and you know me also, right? I have never been scared once I've taken a decision. When I was making *Dasvidaniya*, I had given it to Warner Brothers (India) but after three months, they told me 'no', we can't do the subject because something similar is being made in the West and that was "*The Bucket List*" which unfortunately for us released one and a half years earlier than *Dasvidaniya*, so inevitably when *Dasvidaniya* released, everybody compared it to *The Bucket List*! And trust me, I never feared the comparison and you know what, *Dasvidaniya* still remains in the list of IMDb top 250 films. I have learned and I believe also that a filmmaker should be fearless.





**You take a lot of risks don't you? For instance, in terms of *The Verdict*, you have taken Elli AvrRam as a lead when she had a different image of a dancer, why?**

Elli AvrRam met me few years back. At that point, my third film was *Bajate Raho* which didn't work commercially. The poster of the film had a 55-year-old actress - Dolly Ahluwalia at the centre - She was the lead. On her side, there was Vinay Pathak, Ranvir Shorey, Tusshar Kapoor and Ravi Kishan. So I took that risk. In India, you have a 55-year old actress who's leading your film, it's a difficult film to sell. But I thank my producers Eros and MSM (Sony) who backed my vision.

**You went against the tide...**

So coming back to Elli AvrRam. She met me through a common friend, when I was casting for my film. And though I never meet actors because I feel why should I meet someone if there is no hope for me casting that person anytime soon? But what he told me that you meet

this actress, she has come from Sweden and she is a very good dancer. So if you do require a dancer in your film, you can cast her for that. When she came to meet me, I felt very nice about meeting her because she had a certain kind of innocence and professionalism, which you don't get to see always and the best part is that she still has it. And then she mentioned about her father who's a theatre director, and a mother who's a dancer and actress. I remember the meeting went on for one and a half hours. I felt that she was such a nice talent. And I told her that I won't be able to do much for her and that she should try and go and meet popular directors because I'm making very medium budget films, low budget films or content heavy films. And my films right now don't need a *firang*, I remember telling her that.

Cut to, she met me after three months. And she was doing some Bollywood project and she was telling me that she has been called for many projects but she was not enjoying it because everybody





was looking at her for the role of a dancer or a model or for an item number. I told her to learn Hindi language and make a showreel on her own.

Cut to- Years later, I get offered -*The Verdict* and I was told that they were looking to cast Sylvia Nanavati (wife of Kavas Nanavati) who was from London, I suggested Elli's name with a small condition that they should not tell her that I have recommend her name. The casting team should do a test with her and then decide post that. The test was liked by Subash Kapoor and Ekta Kapoor unanimously and we got our Sylvia Nanavati.

And when Elli got to know that I would be directing it, she called me and thanked me saying that no one else would have even considered her for this important role because of her image.

Also due to some date issues another actor opted out and I suggested Makarand Deshpande's name for the state lawyer because I had wanted to work with Sir for a long time. So I consider myself blessed to be working with such great talents.

### **What were the challenges that you faced while doing this?**

Almost all the actors in the series were multi-talented - Saurabh Shukla, Makarand Deshpande, Swanand Kirkire, Manav Kaul, Angad Bedi, Kubra Sait, Soni Razdan etc, you can imagine everybody had their opinions. But I think what happened was that the first day when they started shooting with me individually, they liked or respected or understood my vision. And they never doubted much. And I am also a person who interacts a lot and am open to inclusion of good or better ideas on the set. And also because it was so beautifully written by Subhash Kapoor and team, my life on set was much easier. You see the problem happens when the writing is weak. I had great fun similar to that when I was directing "*The Great Indian Comedy Show*" and "*Sumit Sambhal Lega*" for Star Plus. I would also like to mention here about my DOP - Mohanna Krishna who enhanced my vision and made the frames look so beautiful.





**Somebody told me that Zee5 had two web series which were exceptionally successful – one was like a Salman Khan film and the other was like an Aamir Khan film - and both have been directed by you. Quite a feat! Which webseries of yours was dubbed the Aamir Khan film...? I know one of the most entertaining webseries - *Jamai 2.0* was called a Salman Khan film for its appeal.**

The producers of *Jamai* (Ashwini Yardi) called me 20 days before the shoot as the designated director had some personal issue which he had to attend to. So I came with my whole team. And then I just made *Jamai* the way it was written because I thought let me have fun. Again here my DOP- Madhu Vannier who I know for many years told me let's do our best to make it look like a film. Rohit Shetty Sir sent a message to Ravi Dubey (main lead of *Jamai 2.0*) saying that when he saw the teaser-trailer of *Jamai 2.0* and he thought it was a film. The entire pre-production happened in 20 days where we all worked for 15 to 18 hours -

Ashwini, Santosh and Dhananjay from Viniyard Films made sure that we were all happy and excited all the time! And after the first teaser was launched, I got a call from the producer saying that the broadcasters had sanctioned season two – this was like a Salman Khan film for them.

And *The Verdict* which I have spoken in detail above was like an Aamir Khan film for them.







### Tell us about *The Chargesheet: Innocent or Guilty?*

I got a call from Rajveer Ahuja - Sir Ashoke Pandit's office and over there, Priyanka narrated the story of *The Chargesheet* to me - I humbly interrupted the narration and told her the rest of the story with many anecdotes. They all got excited. Did you know I had worked on the same story for almost two years, my wife Aarati had researched and written enough material around it. Though we didn't have much time for pre-production but the production was so planned and good that the shooting went on smoothly.

We had great fun on the sets and post the shoot apart from working with a fantastic cast and crew, I ended up making many new friends. During the outdoor shoots, the best part was in any diversity from rains to any other issues we didn't stop, we smiled, made a new plan and kept on shooting or took a snacks break. And for that I would like to thank Sir Ashok Pandit and his entire team. I would love to work with Sikander Kher and Arunoday Singh again soon. Again

I consider myself to be lucky for having such lovely cast and crew. Apart from Production, the food was excellent and I remember making a video of the lunch spread and sending it to my other producers.







**I know you live, drink and breathe films. When you're not making films what do you do?**

I love to cook, watch Bengali films, learn new recipes from my Mother. I spend a lot of time talking to Aarti - she is a writer and our sons - Kriteyu and Bhuvan. We talk about cinema and funny and dramatic incidents on my shoots. We also play songs of Gulzar Saab and other great lyricists and decode it on the weekends.

**Any anecdote - funny or *hat ke* - while shooting that you can share with us?**

So most of the time I don't make a hue 'n' cry of everything that my actors do because then you'll not be able to shoot... But once, one of the actors was refusing to come out of her vanity van and I was told she was very upset. Everybody was bitching about her so I went and spoke to her - and apparently

she had asked for a boiled egg but unfortunately, she was given everything from omelette to half fry but a boiled egg. So what I did was I took a tea kettle, got two eggs and put the water in it and boiled it for 10 minutes and gave it to her. And she was most apologetic and she said, 'listen you don't have to do this for me'. I said but you refused to come out of the vanity van only for a boiled egg and for me, my shoot is much bigger than anybody's ego! After that she never said no to anything - maybe she was coming from some set where the directors don't treat the actors nicely.

**Shashant, what about your Amazon Prime release *Chacha Vidhyak Hain Humhare Season 2* which is high on the political drama content and is doing so well?**

I am so happy that I was called to direct





Season 2 of *Chacha Vidhyak Hain Humhare* and I would like to thank Zakir Khan, Rasika Tyagi and Aliya for this great opportunity. We read the scripts and I realised that after doing three thriller web-series back-to-back this was a dramedy so would be a welcome change. But the expectations of a Zakir show is huge as his fanbase pan India is vast. So I told my team that's lets present this series in a way which looks big, popular but at the same time simple. Because the essence of Zakir bhai's world is simple, quirky yet grounded. So we worked on it again thanks to the amazing writing team and production team and the creator Zakir Bhai that this was one of the smoothest shoot of all. Special mention should go to Rajesh Gaware, my Direction team and Mohanna Krishana (DOP). We faced the biggest challenge of Covid-19 as the shoot had to be stalled in March 2020. But then by the end of last year following proper Covid protocols we shot the

balance scenes. But Covid couldn't puncture our excitement of shooting and we finished well in time with a much smaller unit. *Chacha* falls in the category of one of the few series which we have binged watched at home. Excellent actors and great team with honest intent is how I would like to sum up the experience of *CVHH2*.

### **Lastly, what is Shashant Shah going to be doing in the future?**

Just completed a film for Sir Neeraj Pandey. Now it's in the post-production stage. Also about future projects, I don't know what to say? Whatever beautiful, exciting and challenging comes across, I'll do that.

There is a plan you make and then there are plans that are already made for you. So I go with the flow.

• • • • •



“  
I think when you have the right intentions, good approach to the work, sense of business and the desire to make good content, everything falls into place.”  
– Anand Pandit

The film *The Big Bull* starring Abhishek Bachchan is creating quite a buzz. Anand Pandit, the co-producer of the film – Ajay Devgn is also the producer – talks about the film, Abhishek Bachchan and why they opted for an OTT release.







**Your film *The Big Bull* is garnering a lot of interest. How do you feel when you see the bouquets, praises and critical acclaim?**

It's a pleasure that we have got a great response. Abhishek Bachchan looks perfect for his character who plays a Gujarati businessman. I am happy and I think my journey as a producer has been great by God's grace. I think when you have the right intentions, good approach to the work, sense of business and the desire to make good content, everything falls into place."

***The Big Bull* is also being produced by Ajay Devgn, how was it working with him?**

Ajay is a dear friend and it's been a great experience having an association with Ajay. He is so creatively sharp and very comfortable to work with. It was both Ajay and my decision to bring Abhishek on board for *The Big Bull* as he is such a fantastic actor.





**“It’s a delight to work with Abhishek Bachchan. He is such a dedicated, hardworking actor and also a very good human being.”**

**You had to push *The Big Bull*'s theatrical release from October 23, 2020 to an OTT release now...Could you tell us about it?**

Yes, we had to push the theatrical release because of the covid problem and we were not left with any other option expect coming on the OTT Platform. Since Ajay and I were in touch with *Disney+Hotstar*, we decided mutually to go for an OTT release.

**What is the turning point in *The Big Bull*? Is it a power-packed action film?**

Not at all! *The Big Bull* is not a power-packed action film but it's a poignant story of rags to riches. It is about a Gujarati gentleman who uses the loopholes of the system to become a business tycoon.

**How was it working with Abhishekh Bachchan and the rest of the cast?**

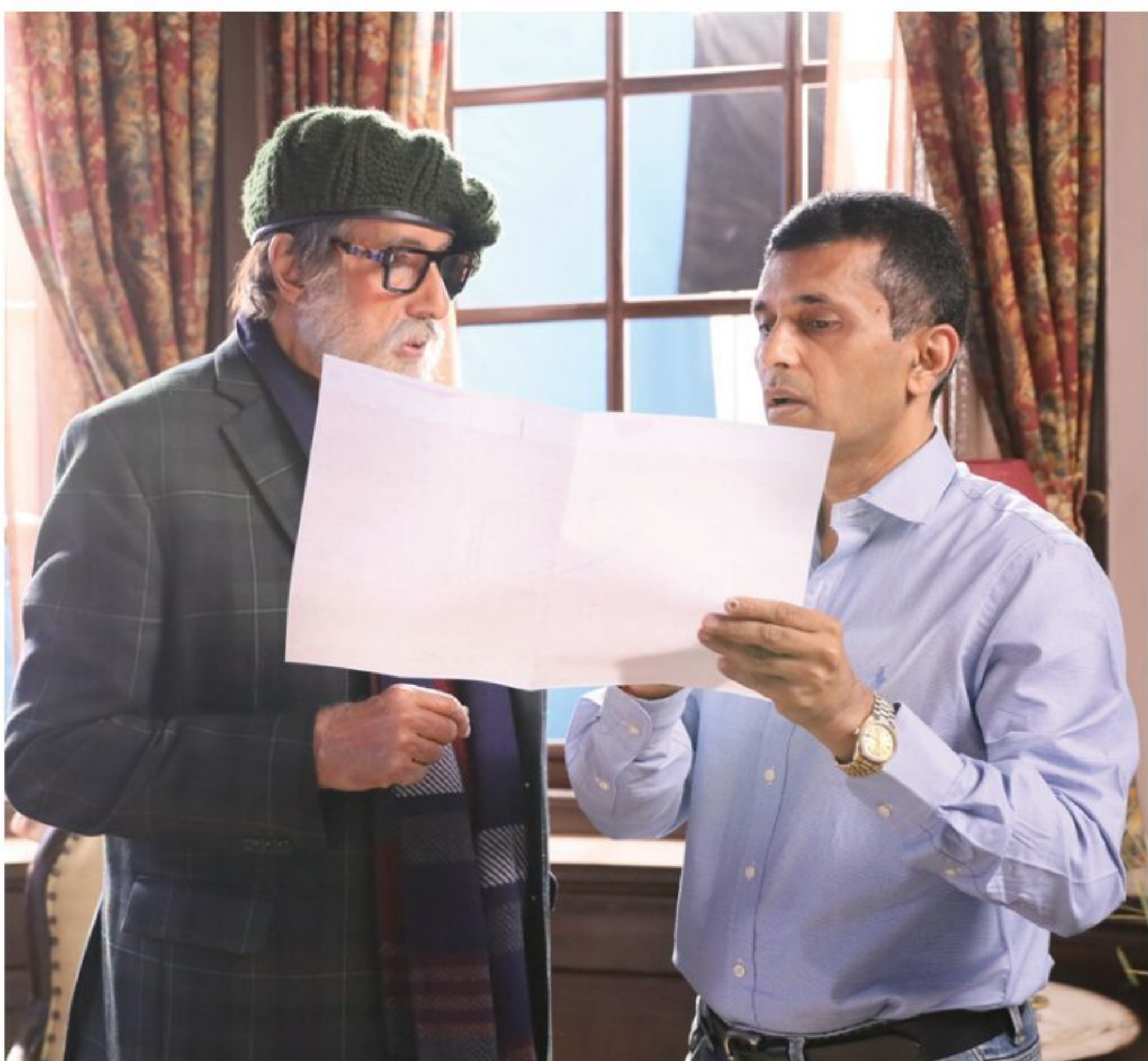
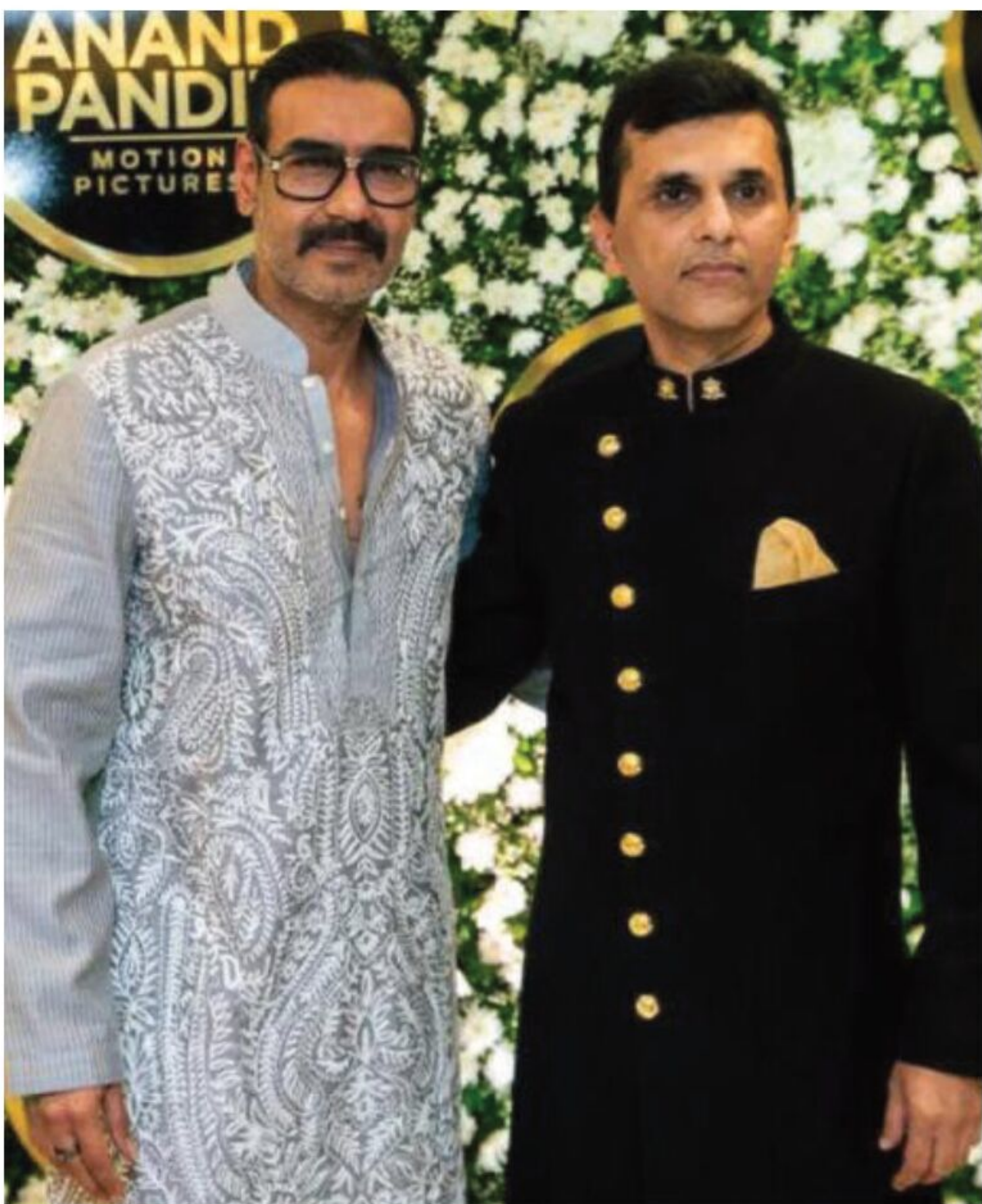
It's a delight to work with Abhishek Bachchan. He is such a dedicated, hardworking actor and also a very good human being. I think things become so easy for a Producer when you have good and humble actors to work with and of course, Abhishek is one of them.

**Tell us about the Disney+ Hotstar release?**

I think it was everyone's decision to get *The Big Bull* on Disney+Hotstar which is a good platform.

**What's after this?**

There are many plans in the pipeline but I cant talk about it now, we will reveal when the right time comes.







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**Starry Look**

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# It's 'Kay' To Be You!

**The gorgeous Katrina Kaif** eyes a game changing eyeshadow palette that touches your soul.





Katrina Kaif says, "Eyes are indeed a window to our soul, and every individual has a unique way to express his or her personality through them."

She has launched The Kay Beauty 9-in-1 Eyeshadow Palette which has color tones that reflect both - theme and emotion. Katrina says, "Each theme will strike a chord as it is so much a part of all of us. These palettes have become my go-to essentials for creating different eye looks. I just love the fact that there are 9 shades per palette, and it gives us the freedom to explore the artist within us to create some eye magic."

Indeed, it's time to power up your beauty game with eyeshadows. Not too many know how to get that arresting eyeshadow palette. Katrina Kaif through her Kay Beauty launches - the Kay Beauty Eyeshadow Palette with four game-changing eye shadow palettes that reflect the most beautiful forms of self-expression.

Katrina has given a voice to emerging artist Gaurvi Sharma as she finds her work inspiring and soulful. Her designs recreated these emotions beautifully in a way that is extremely relatable to any woman. These palettes are artfully rendered via beautiful illustrations depicting four unique moods: Love, Pure, Soul and Free.

These versatile palettes find an expression and inspiration through Gaurvi's work, namely, *Bare Soul*, reflecting your truest and realest self, is a lovely nude palette with smokey hues. *Self Love*, a luscious evening palette of wine tones, is a reminder to show yourself some love. *Wild and Free* is an earthy mix of warm tones to explore the limitless you, while *Pure Bloom* is a collection of peachy floral tones, for a dreamy day look, channeling inner beauty that's ready to blossom.

The 9-in-1 palettes offer a gorgeous mix of matte and shimmer shades, each carrying a unique name, making it easy to identify, while you plan that eye game. The high-pigment formula offering a one-stroke application, is blendable and buildable. The multiple shades give you the freedom to move from daywear to evening glam with ease, all while being smudge-proof and transfer-proof. The sleek packaging also features a mirror inside, making it an ideal travel companion.

Artist, Gaurvi Sharma said, *"I loved working on the illustrations for this product line. When I heard the themes, based on emotions, I felt I could relate to each and every one of them. I just had to look within and let it all flow on the paper. The intent and effort behind the brand, Kay Beauty was clearly visible, and I was very much at ease accepting this project. The promise of #ItsKayToBeYou is admirable and allows women to celebrate themselves. I'm delighted that Katrina and the brand have given me this chance to contribute towards something that all women can relate to. Also, might I add that life comes full circle, as Katrina's movie Zindagi Milegi Na Dobara inspired me years back, when I was struggling to get back to art, post-pregnancy, and it taught me how one must never give up on their dreams!"*



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Salman Khan says that we  
(Radhika) and I think alike...  
and calls us Siamese Twins.

//

From working with music industry stalwarts like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Jagjit Singh to today's singers including Jubin Nautiyal, Neha Kakkar, Meet Bros, Anjaan to directing films... director duo Vinay Sapru and Radhika Rao have directed a plethora of music albums. In a candid conversation with Nikita Nikhil, Vinay Sapru of director duo Vinay and Radhika, talks about 21 years of his career, the challenges faced while working as a director duo, and their future projects. Read on to find out more...





**You both have been working together since 1995 and have directed videos for veteran singers like Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Falguni Pathak, Bombay Vikings to contemporary singers like Dhvani Bhanushali, Neha Kakkar, Kanika Kapoor, Jubin Nautiyal. In 21 years of your career, how has the music industry evolved?**

We both have probably seen a revolution in the music industry. When we started working, there were cassettes, then came CDs (compact disks). Now the CDs are redundant. There has been a technical revolution that has come. However, as far as creatives are concerned, you know when you work with greats like, we were also 20 years younger at that time, we were working with greats like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Lata ji, Asha ji, who were like God at that time. They were like legends. So once you work with Jagjit Singh, Pankaj Udaas, Falguni Pathak, so yes you feel like you have done the journey of music. When we took the sabbatical of three-four years, we were thinking now whom should we

work with? Because we had worked with Lata ji, Asha ji. So then we thought, that was then, now is now, so let's work with today's musicians and singers. Everybody has got something. Then we worked with Neha Kakkar and Dhvani Bhanushali, we were Dhvani's mentors. It was such a pleasant and happy experience because all of them are talented. They bring in a perspective that I have never felt with Asha ji and Lata ji. They bring another perspective to the whole scene. There was one time when sur had a voice. Today the voice needs a texture, tonality, and something different. Voice does not necessarily mean that the person has to sing the song on a certain scale. For that, we have technicians and other machines so that we can auto-tune the voices. You don't have to be great to catch a scale. But if you have something special in your voice, like Dhvani has got something special in her voice and so does Neha. So it's like an absolutely different environment.







**When you look back, how has the journey been working together?**

Salman Khan says that we think alike and calls us Siamese Twins. Actually, what happens is that a partnership cannot survive if the thinking, likes, and dislikes are not similar. Because Radhika and my tastes, likes, and dislikes are so common and similar that we have been able to come so far. Like every person has a certain calling, Radhika and I have a very musical calling. Music has been a binding factor in our partnership which has run so long. We have done more than 150 songs. The films that we do are also somewhat musical.

**So that means that the journey has been adventurous...**

I don't know about adventurous but yes, when you work with legends from Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan to Arijit Singh, when I look back I think probably we are the only directors who have worked with practically every musical talent of our country. I have worked with Anu Malik, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Pritam, Jagjit Singh, Lata ji, etc. So it has

been such a blessed journey of ours. When we look back, the journey has been a fulfilling one. I think it is more Karmic and karma that brought us so much. We are so grateful.

**The video of 'Lut Gaye' looks amazing. Can you tell us something about the video?**

Radhika and I were so scared because we generally don't do songs with actors, except for Salman Khan. So, this is the first time we were working as directors with somebody else. Emraan was the first actor that we agreed to. For the video, we wanted to set up a story that was almost like a biography of an encounter cop. So, before he becomes an encounter cop, what is his prequel? What made him become an encounter cop. So if you peep into the lives of these cops, you'll see what makes them an encounter cop because they live life on the edge. They see so many murders, so many killings. So what was the motive behind this? It is almost like a biographical journey of this cop that we can see it. It





is set in The 1990s', so the whole look is created according to that particular year. The journey is of star-crossed lovers. It's a tragic tale of love. The tale is on one side but then there is casting, costume, and art when you are setting up the story, everything has to be sad. It needs to have a feeling of sobriety and tragedy in it. So we tried to put the whole thing. The audience is liking it and loving it. Also, taking up Emraan Hashmi as a character. When casting Emraan sir, he is a person who can bring this tragic feel on the screen, he has got sad eyes and all. So the whole journey of the song has been keeping in mind the biographical tragedy and tragic journey of an encounter cop of Mumbai Police.

**The video features Emraan Hashmi along with model-turned-actor Yukti Thareja. How did you zero in on these two? How was your experience working with them?**

See, for Emraan Hashmi, it was an inspired casting. We told Bhushan ji that we want to work with Emraan Sir because this is a

character that would be playing the lead in a tragic tale of love. So Emraan sir was pretty much designed to be our undercover cop in an encounter cop's biographical journey. So that was pretty much him. For Yukti, there's a process of casting that goes on here. It was a story of a young bride. Yukti is a fab actor and we always wanted a girl who will take your heart away as a bride, who has a face of a beautiful bride. She has pretty much vintage, classic looks of Yukti. That's why we zeroed in on her. She is a fab actor and hardworking because when we mentor and introduce anybody, it's a long two-three months journey. She was like Rockstar, working through it, going through the workshops, rehearsals, and everything. It was a lovely experience working with them. Yukti rehearsed for like two and a half months. Emraan sir is like a director's actor. He has given so many blockbuster songs but when we were shooting for this song, I told him how we wanted him to sing this song or look in a specific way. Because big stars like him have a massive fan base, they have a set look and feel when they sing a song.





But he said if you want it like this, I'll give you like this. He never comes on the monitor, never interferes. Emraan used to stay with us on the sets until 2 a.m. I told him that you have spoiled us both. Yukti was on auto-pilot. We did not have to instruct Yukti, she knew what she had to do because she has done so many workshops. She is such a sweetheart and adorable person.

**Since the two of you are co-directors, what kind of challenges do you face while working with each other? How do you reach a consensus?**

No, it's pretty much like Yin and Yang. We have been working together for so long now so we are pretty much aware of one's pluses and minuses. She knows that I am good at the screenplay, she is good at the story. So in such a long journey, you know a person. The thinking is alike even if one person is better at something. It's like children who grow up together. We know each other's good and bad and there is no ego hassle. So it's been like that. Once we were shooting with Salman Khan, I was on the monitor and Radhika was standing 30-40 feet away from

me, explaining the shot to Salman. After a while, I spoke on the mic and asked Radhika to explain the shot to Salman in a certain way and Radhika was explaining the same thing over there. Salman said, "Oh shit, you guys are scary, how much can you think alike!?" So it's been a long journey working together. Now it's more like a habit than a partnership. It is more of a complimenting relationship than a competitive one.

**You both have also directed numerous ad films. What is more exciting for you, song videos or ad films? Why?**

Absolutely songs. Songs top our list. Because I think now Radhika and I have realized that music is our calling. God has let us creatives grace music, sound and songs, and all that. That is pretty much clear in our heads. So we are now absolutely focused. As a filmmaker, there are lots of branches but I think music is what makes us the happiest. That is why we have such a strong association with Bhushan ji. He smiles and glows when we talk about music, that's the reason he has got such a huge label. Also, that's why our songs with Bhushan ji become such hits.



**You are now all set to be a part of a musical film in collaboration with Bhushan Kumar and the T-Series banner. Could you talk about this project?**

It's a musical coming of age film. We will be shooting it in March with an ensemble cast with three boys and three girls. We will be shooting it in London, summer, and autumn this year. It is scheduled to be released in November and I hope our magic with Bhushan ji continues on screen. As a producer, let's leave the revelation of the project name on Bhushan ji.

**I noticed that your movies are mostly or partly shot at abroad locations. Lucky was shot in Russia; I love NY was shot in New York and Bangkok and your upcoming musical film too would be shot in London. Is there any specific reason for it?**

I think now that you have pointed out, I have noticed. It just happens. It's just that sometimes relationships in the story demand the characters to be in an alien world. If we are in Mumbai or Kolkata, we don't get a sense of loneliness in our country. But when you leave or move to another country, the person becomes lonely. Even if you don't have any relatives in Mumbai or any other city in our country, you still feel a sense of belonging here which you don't in any other country. So that's why but it's not that we do it deliberately.

**Who is more dominating between the two of you? Who calls the shots?**

Like I said, no one is dominating. It all depends. Like Radhika is strict for perfection and rehearsals. For that matter even I am strict for rehearsals but she gets upset and all that. But nothing, like I said it is like a complementary relationship.

**What makes you a strong duo in the director's circle as opposed to a single person?**

See there are single directors out there, I think we both are an exception here.



But the creative process is a very lonely and scary process. God knows when your creatives stop working, you can't figure out why the audience has stopped liking your work and thoughts. That is a very lonely and scary journey. So in that sense, if you have a partner to discuss, so I think that is very comforting. All the time you are fighting and battling out because life, in a creative circle and movie-making process, it's a wild rollercoaster. That is the advantage that a partner has. I always envy these directors who are on this solo journey. Hats off to them, they don't have anybody on the set to go and confide in with the same goals, objectives, and insecurities. Because Radhika and I have the same thought process but those directors out there are managing along and I think they are very strong in that sense.

**What are your future projects?**

First is the musical picture with Bhushan ji which I mentioned earlier. Now with Emraan's song Lut Gaye being released, I am sure many more songs will come. In the next four days, I will be shooting a song with Arjun Kapoor. He is also a very big star. So I think that will open a door because the songs in the movies are not doing that well, neither are the movies getting released in theatres. It's a very changing world and changing environment, so maybe this will start a new area of operations. Hoping this also becomes a very happy world. Then we will be doing Yaad Piya Ki Aane Lagi 2 because the first video said: "to be continued". These three will be our major projects.



“

YES, I'M  
LOOKING  
FORWARD  
TO ACTING  
IN MY MUSIC  
VIDEOS TOO.”

The talented Amit Mishra who comes out with his newest single Tera Deewana talks to Sumita Chakraborty about his new song, journey and more.

His voice touches your soul as it is extremely melodious, pure and honest. Meet singer Amit Mishra who rose to fame with Ranbir Kapoor's film Ae Dil Hai Mushkil's pulsating super hit song Bulleya and so many other hit songs. Amit's newest single Tera Deewana released by Zee Music is doing extremely well. Read on as Amit Mishra talks about his new single Tera Deewana, his journey and more...







**Amit, you have a very soulful voice which touches the heart, how did your journey into the music world start? Are your parents too in singing?**

My music journey started when I was in the third standard and my teacher selected me for the school choir. My sister was already a part of the school choir – she is a brilliant singer but she's in the medical field. My mum is very fond of music – she is into folk music. My dad too loves music and is a huge fan of Mukeshji. So the atmosphere at home is musical. In the fifth standard I took music as my optional subject and so my journey started from there. In my BCom from Lucknow university, I studied vocals. I was also part of a lot of bands and participated in a lot of singing competitions. My singing training was under a lot of gurus. Pritamda of course, has been a great mentor for me.

**“Pritamda of course, has been a great mentor for me.”**

**How did you get into the film world? Did you have contacts?**

I got in touch with a lot of people in the music industry and they were very kind to me. I did a lot of studio sessions and started building contacts. In terms of composers, I first sang a song for Prashant Singh ji called “Soniye” for the movie Hum Do Anjaane starring Jackie Shroff. I recorded its flat version and Kunal Ganjawala sang its original version and then I sang the band version of that song. The song worked as

my demo music which I used to send to other composers proudly saying that it's my voice. Later, I got a chance to meet Chirantan Bhatt. But it was Shakeel Azmi, one of the top lyricists in the music industry, who recommended me to contact Mr. Bhatt. I went to Mr. Bhatt's studio and dubbed a song for the movie 1920: Evil Returns called 'Majboor Tu Bhi Kahin.' Then it was film director and producer Suneel Darshan who gave me a chance to sing for his son Shiv Darshan's movie Karle Pyaar Karle. I got to sing two songs in the movie – Teri Saason Mein with Arijit Singh and Palak Muchhal and O Darling which was like a party number. After that, I sang back-to-back for Palash Muchhal and for many others but ultimately, I got my big breakthrough through Pritamda, of course. For him, I got to sing Manma Emotion from the movie Dilwale. Later, I sang Sau Tarah Ke from Dishoom, then Bulleya from Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, and then I also got a chance to sing with Rochak Kohli sir. So luckily, I got a chance to sing from one composer to another. And believe it or not, but every composer has become my teacher for that song. Later, I sang for Hitesh Sonik for an OTT movie called Rajma Chawal for Netflix and also, my first OTT project.

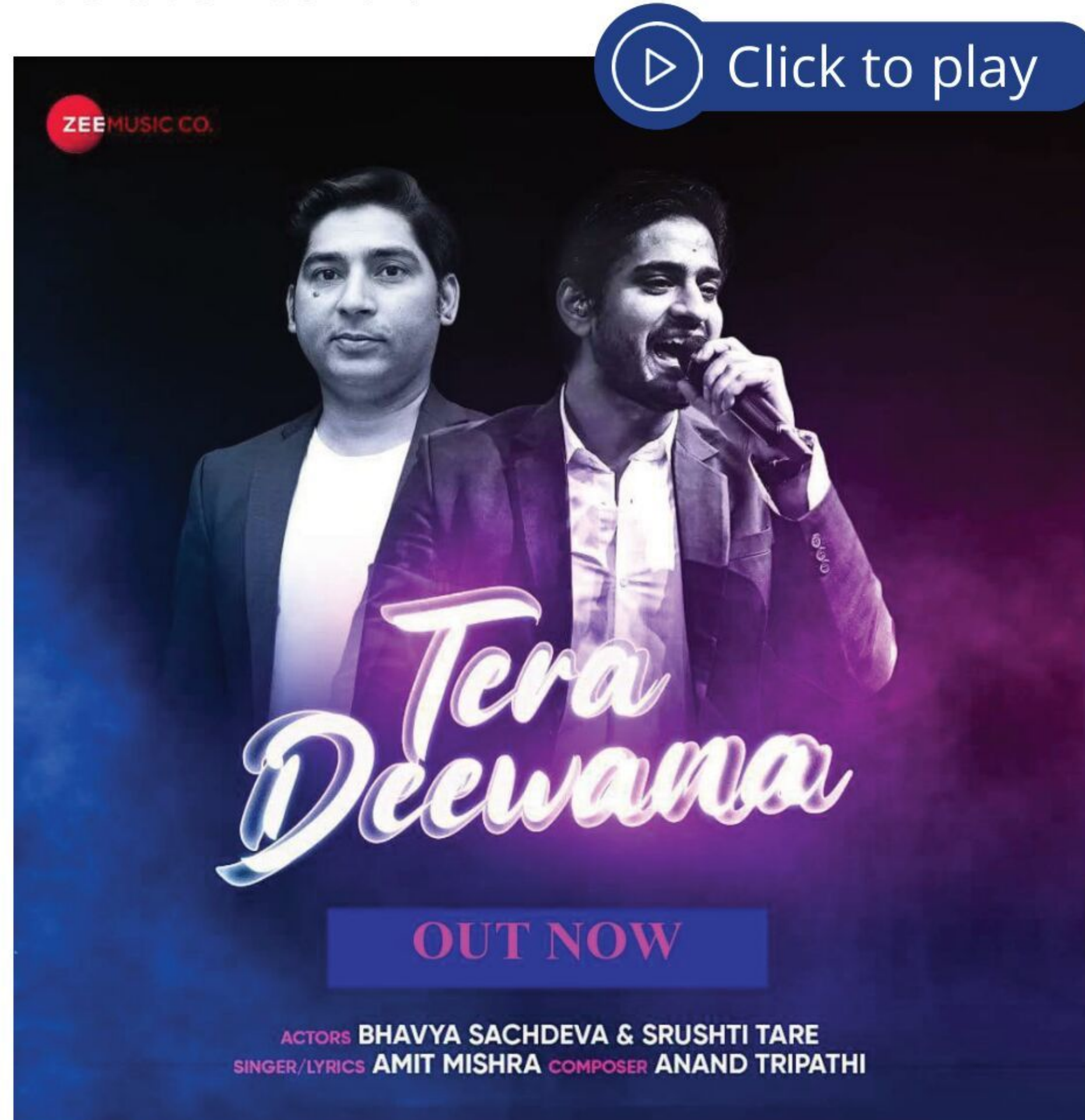
**“In terms of singing, yes Tera Deewana was a bit of a challenge as it has a lot of power and high scales.”**





I was honored to be a part of that project because the movie had six songs and I got to sing four of them. I got a lot of opportunities and projects to sing on after that. I got to sing Galti Se Mistake with (Pritam) Dada. So that's how the journey has been so far!

**"I really liked the Casanova track of Tiger Shroff – he's a great actor and a very good singer too."**



thank Zee and Anurag Bedi. It's a brilliant song and reintroduced very well by Subhadeep Mitra. I'm happy that Anand Tripathi liked the lyrics of the song – we were just jamming and I wrote the lyrics then. We sent the demo lyrics written by me to Anurag Bedi and he approved of it. I had written it in the form of Awadhi's nirgun which you can call sufi too and the song was composed with both Indian and western percussionist.

**Your new album Tera Deewana has just been released – Could you tell us something about this?**

My song Tera Deewane is released by Zee Music and Anand Swaroop Tripathi has composed this song. I would like to

**How challenging was this album for you as you are also the singer and lyricist for it?**

In terms of singing, yes it was a bit of a challenge as it has a lot of power and high scales. In terms of lyrics, I just penned it by chance, so it wasn't challenging because I penned it as a conceptual. I didn't have





**“I got an opportunity to sing a song with Amitabhji – he was doing rap in the song – so I was thrilled.”**

to follow any directors point of view, so I was free to do what I wanted. In terms of singing, it has some challenges. But I had a wonderful time while recording it.

**Your last album Bechainiyan has been acclaimed and has done well. Bigg Boss finalist and actor Romil Chaudhary was featured in the song... will you be collaborating with him again? Any chance of you acting in your own video?**

Bechainiyan was produced by Reena Mehta and did well. It had a dream composition. Romil Chaudhary who featured in it, did a fabulous job. Yes, of course, I'd love to collaborate with him some time again. Yes, I have done a video called Vacation with my band members. It did very well. It was a typical rock 'n' roll kind of genre – my favourite genre. Yes, I'm looking forward to acting in my music videos too.

**So many actors have moved to your field – singing, will you move to their field – acting?**

So many actors have tried their hands in singing and they are doing very well. I really liked the Casanova track of Tiger Shroff – he's a great actor and a very good singer too. Shraddha Kapoor too did a fabulous job singing. They are singing really nice. Of course, Amitabh Bachchan has been a landmark as he has sung so many songs. I got an opportunity to sing a song with Amitabhji – he was doing rap in the song – so I was thrilled. I'd love to be part of some very interesting projects where I can act and fit into the character.

**What's next for you?**

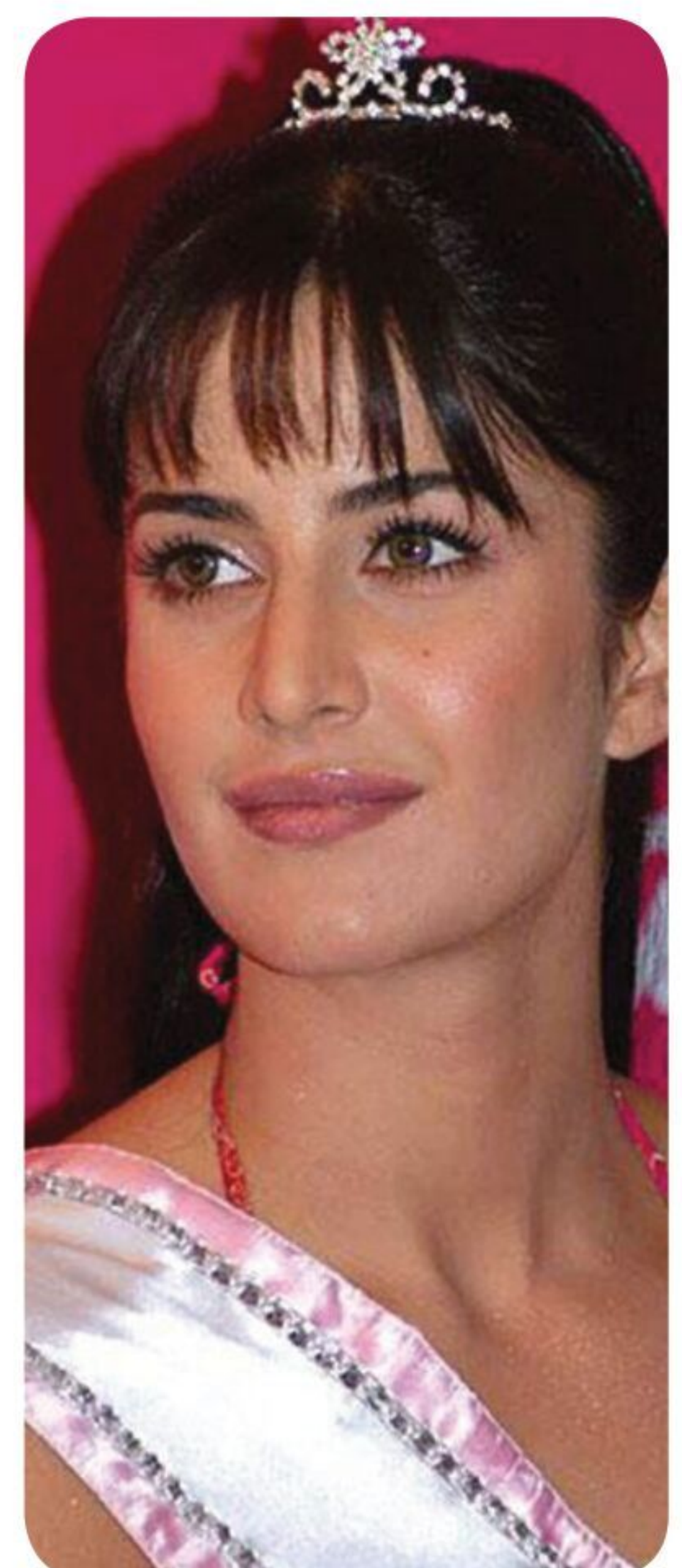
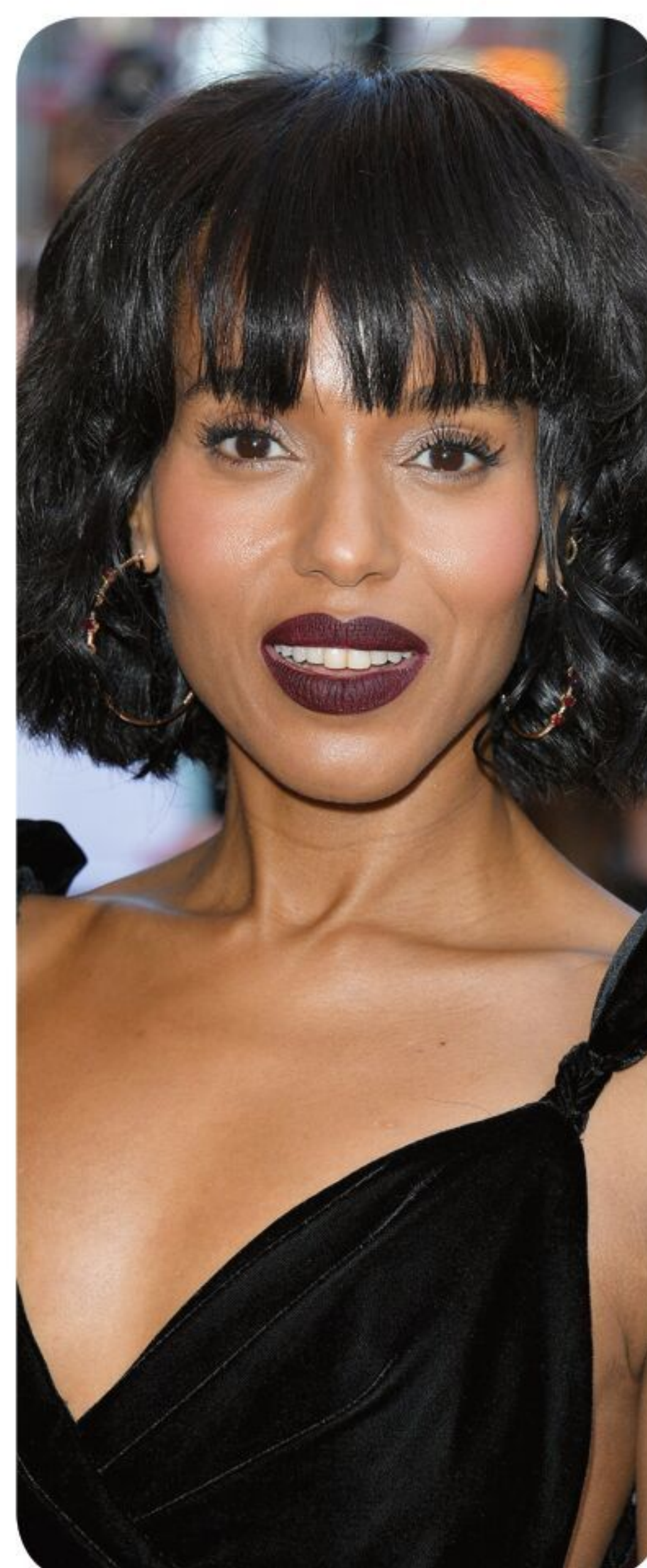
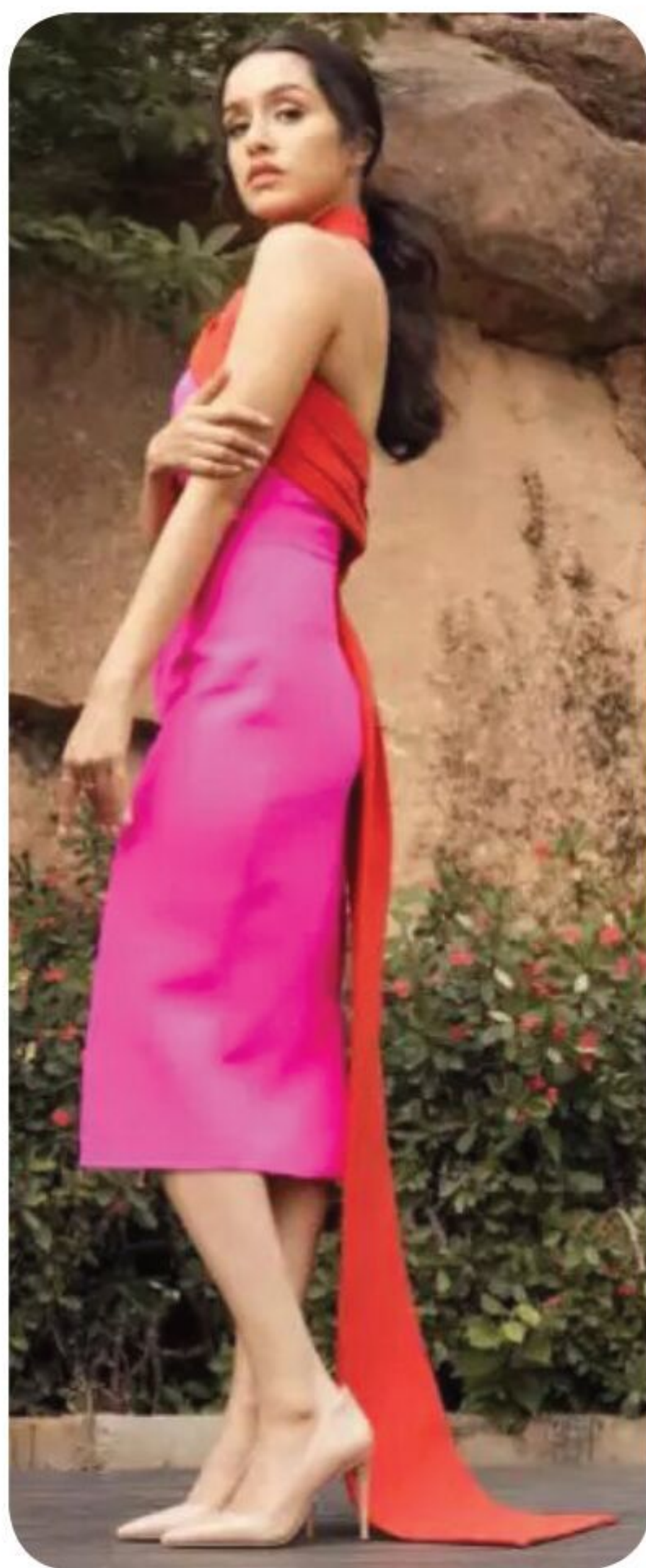
There are couple of singles, jingles and my own videos. So far, I'm busy with a few devotional tracks for Tips music and some commercial independent singing. I'm looking forward to music tracks from films too so hopefully, they get released in a couple of months. Honestly, it's a great journey for me. I have all my gurus, parents and music directors to thank. I would also like to thank Stardust for always supporting me.



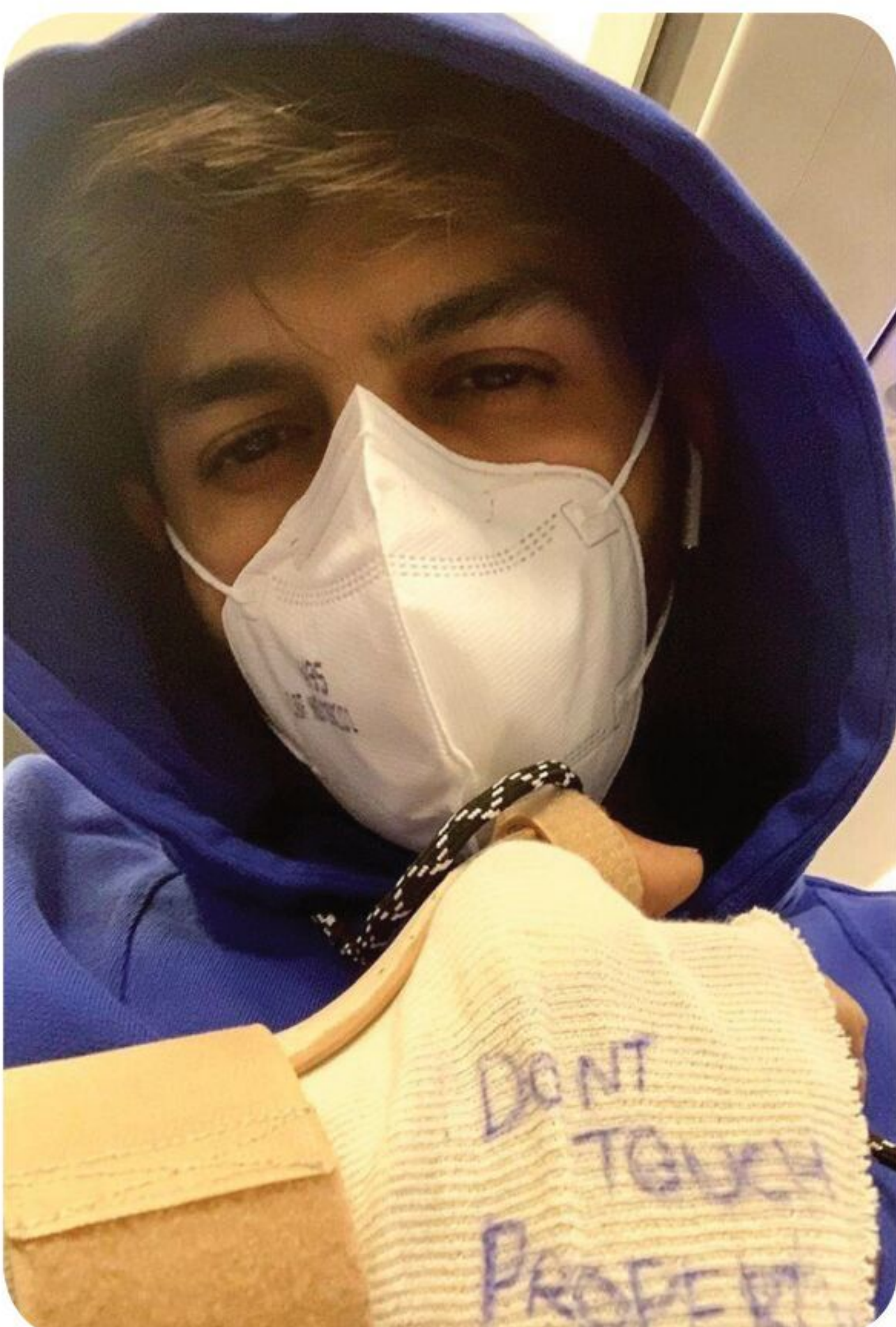
# STARRY SASHAY

From color block to fringes, to masks... fashion has done a volte face this pandemic year. Gone are the days when you talk about haute couture ensembles... now the style trend veers completely on comfort and ease. Of course, our Bollywood stylesters can pull off any trend – be it in color block, fringes or masks. We pick some of our faves from B-Town that strike the perfect balance between fashion and comfort.

Aren't they all looking just fab!? So what are you waiting for? Get fashion inspired from some of the best Bollywood looks and this time, it's a Yay or Nay ranking system. Start marking them!









# STARDUST ON THE GO

Are actors outside their shooting world as glamorous as they look on the silver screen? Can female actors in Tinsel Town be good friends? Who are the new love-birds in B-town? Team Stardust brings you a bird eye's view into the private lives of Tinsel Town eye candies.



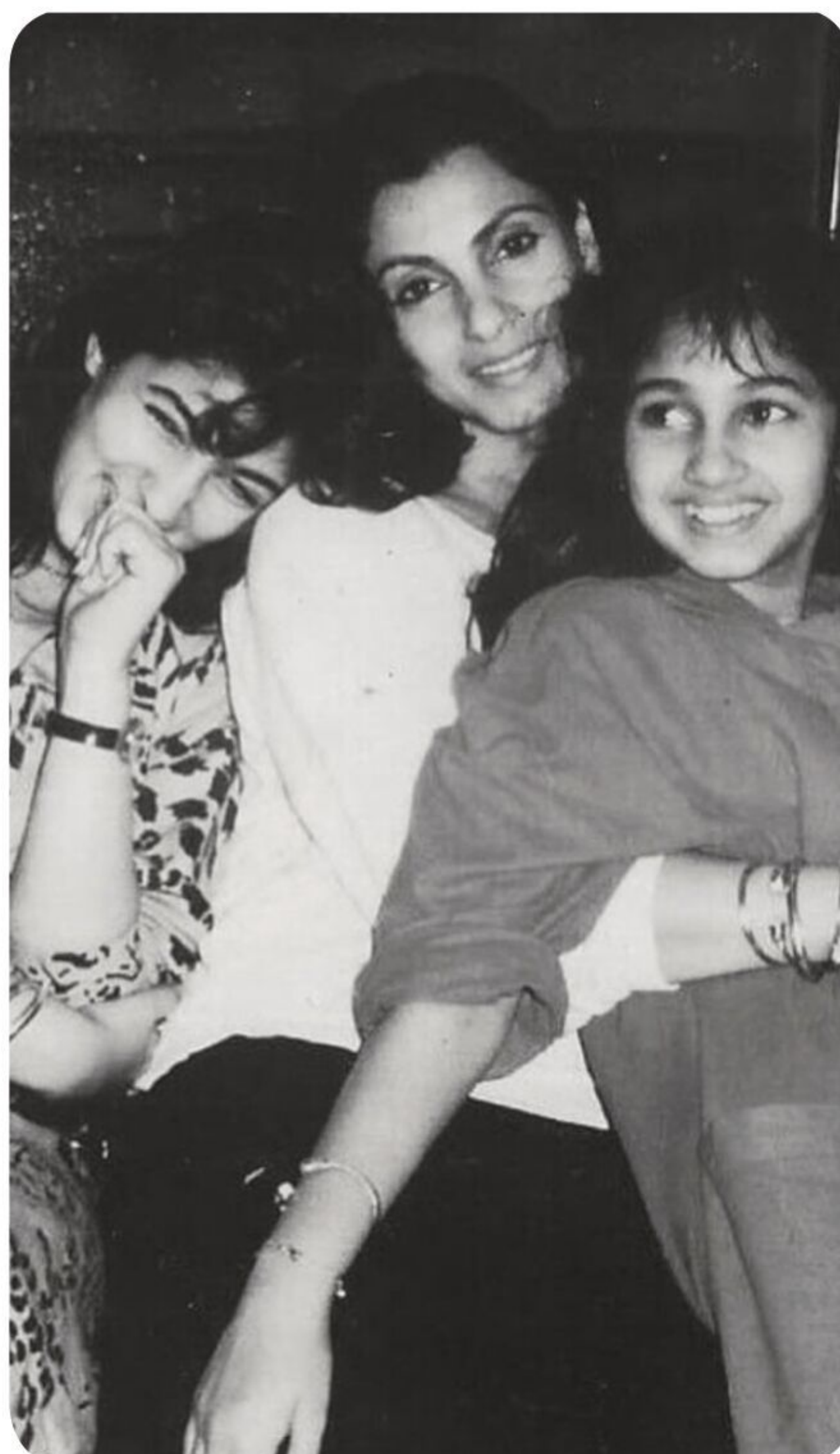
*Deepika Padukone's throwback picture*



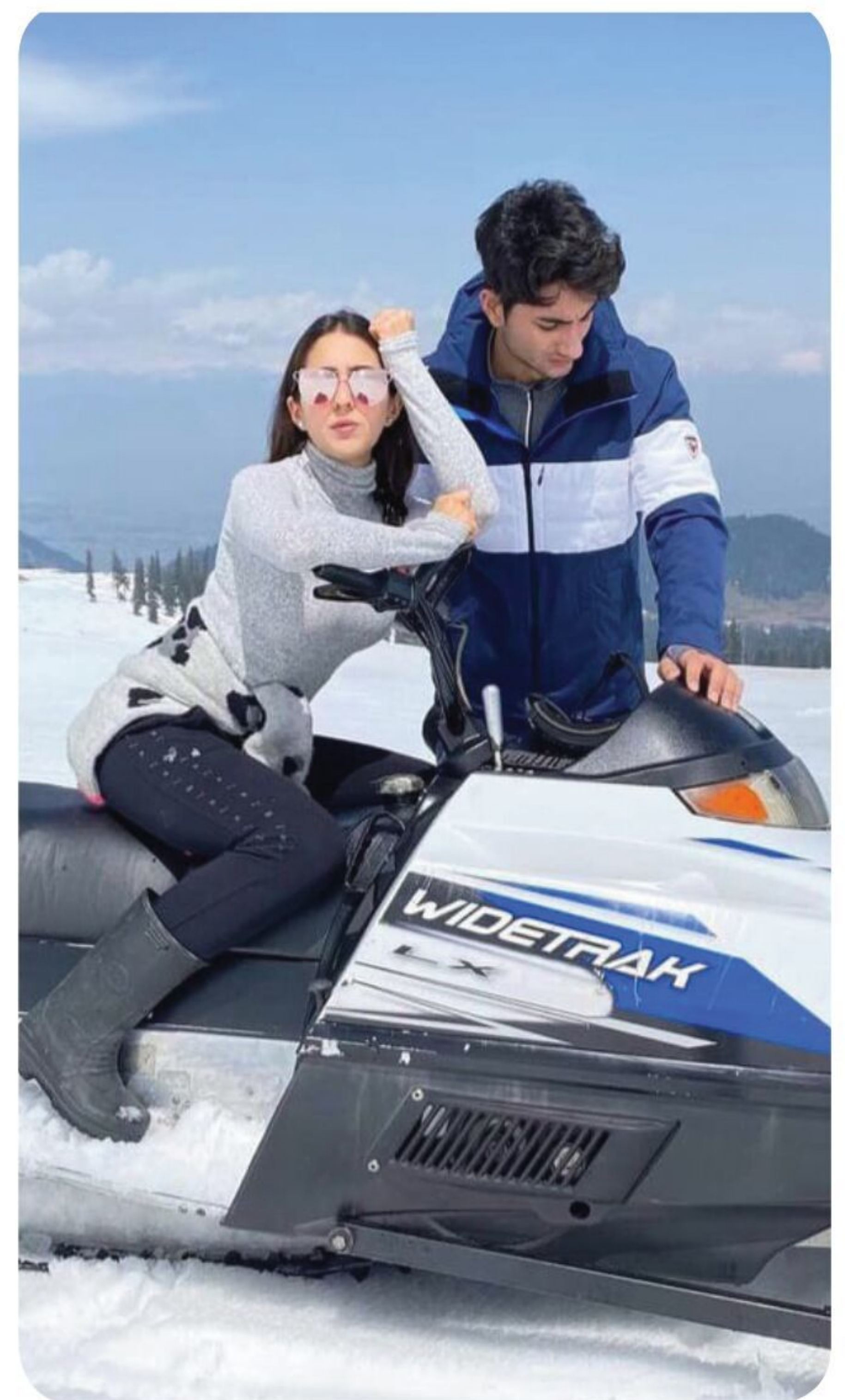
*She's Bollywood's wild child, she's Sushmita Sen*



*All dressed up and nowhere to go:  
Sonakshi Sinha*



*Throwback: Dimple Kapadia with li'l  
Twinkle and Rinki*



*Sara Ali Khan with brother Ibrahim on a  
snowmobile*





*The sun in my face: Priyanka Chopra Jonas*



*Madhuri Dixit Nene looks gorgeous in a picturesque setting*



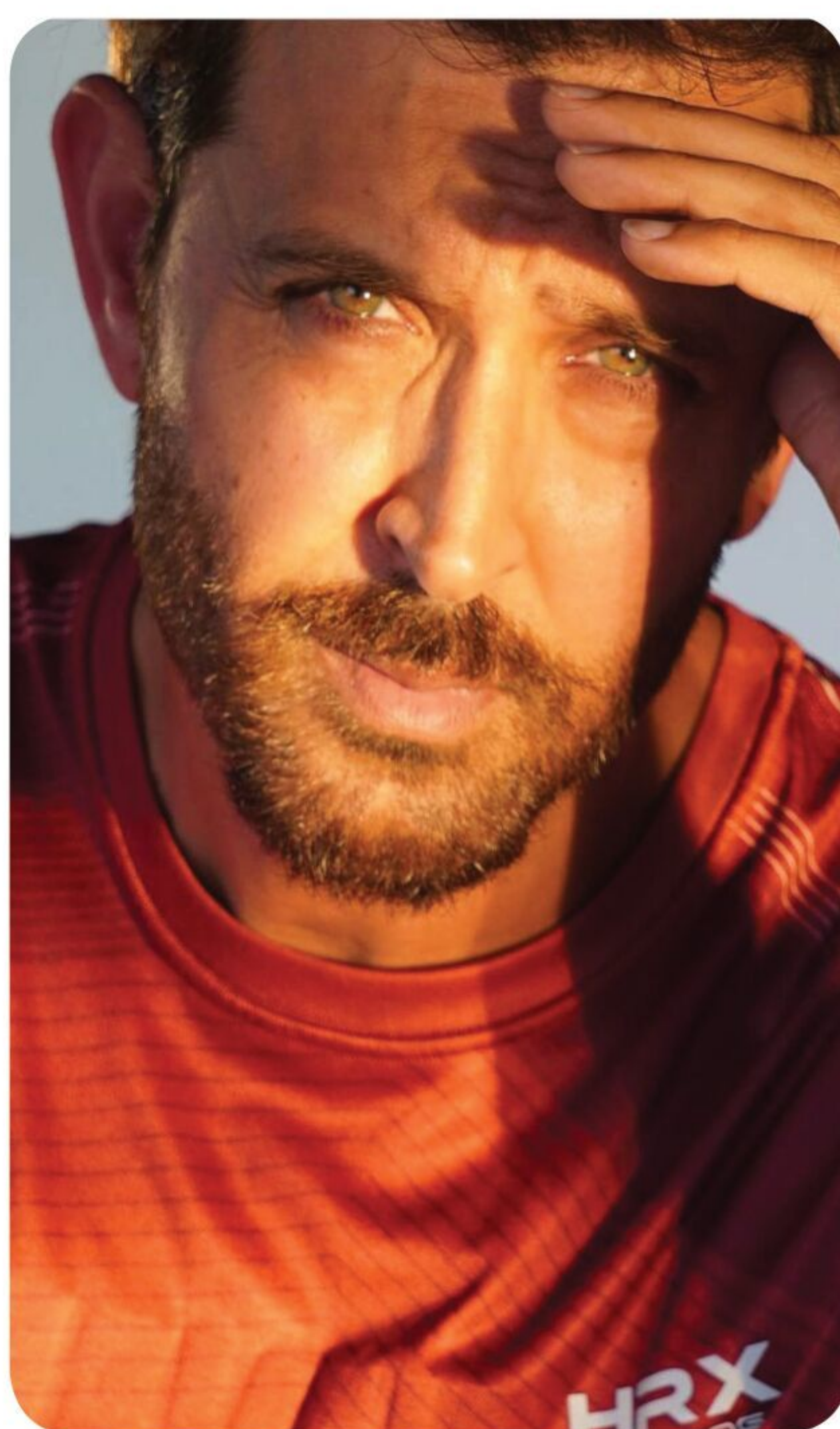
*One rainy day in London with Sonam Kapoor*



*When mom says settle your cupboard: Sidhant Chaturvedi*



*Shop till we drop: Neelam Kothari Soni and Bhavna Pandey*



*As sexy as Hrithik Roshan*



*When Aamir Khan met Kunal Kapoor*



“

**At some point in time, I used to feel that I missed a lot of chances because I don't come from a filmi family, but now I feel that I would not have liked it any other way.**

**- Jubin Nautiyal**

”



Click to play



**H**e hails from a small town in Uttarakhand and didn't have any filmi contact but his determination, resilience and confidence in his talent has reached him to the position he is in today. His latest song *Lut Gaye* is a massive hit which has garnered him acclaim and praises. ...Meet the man with the soulful voice, Jubin Nautiyal who has won the nations' heart with his melodious songs and has proved with his hard work and conviction that the sky is the limit for him. In conversation with Nikita Nikhil, Jubin Nautiyal, talks about his journey, struggle and what the future holds for him...

**Jubin, you have been in this industry for five years now. Can you describe your music journey? How did it start?**

I shifted to Mumbai in 2012 and got my first song in 2014. So, I have been singing for seven years now. If I want to sum up my journey, I would say that my biggest achievement has been singing successfully for seven years and still sounding fresh. Even after seven years, my listeners and fans feel a new voice has been launched. I think that has been my biggest achievement. Many artists came in front of me, enjoyed stardom, and then vanished. That thought made me very scared. For me, creative growth is imperative. So just to feed that creativity, I think my greatest achievement has been that I have been singing for seven years, generating hits every year, and regardless of that people feel a sense of freshness in my voice. My music journey started from Dehradun but the seed of it was planted way back by my parents when I was little. I took music as a subject in Class 10th and 12th and even in my college. So it was not like a hobby that turned into a passion, it was more like a planned education that went through. I pursued singing as a career. From a very young age, my parents planted the seed





of singing in me, even though no one from my family is inclined towards music. My dad, however, is very fond of singing – I’m talking about the days when people collected cassettes and wrote lyrics in

“ **So music was not like a hobby that turned into a passion, it was more like a planned education that went through.** ”

diaries. In those days, people followed music religiously and the seed that my Dad planted in me then blossomed and I think it’s because of him that there’s an old-world charm in my music.

**Your latest song ‘Lut Gaye’ has got some great reviews. Could you tell us about that song?**

First of all, I want to show my undying loyalty towards Nusrat Saab. This song and *dhun* belong to Nusrat Saab. For me, Nusrat Saab is the finest and the biggest composer who has ever lived. These are the kind of songs that were composed way before we were born and will be evergreen even after we die. Secondly, I would like to give a big hug to Manoj ji for writing it so beautifully. As a composer and artist, it was a huge responsibility to pull off this song. I think Tanishk Bagchi and Manoj Muntashir has done a great job. Then I would say *Lut Gaye* is an Emraan Hashmi single too. I mean, Emraan Hashmi in a song like that is wow. It is something that people really enjoy. Thereafter comes my contribution because I have sung that song. A lot of hard work went into it. Usually, when I start working on any song, my first and foremost motive is to make that song my own. The audience should feel that the song is created as well as sung by me only. It gives a feeling of independence. Right before *Lut Gaye*, my other project *Main Jis Din Bhula Du* got released. If you listen to it carefully, it

has a very different vocal take. You will feel that Jubin has sung it very differently. *Lut Gaye* is basically a qawaali that is being turned into a song. It was a bit challenging. All thanks to directors who shot it so well – Radhika and Vinay and of course, Bhushan Ji. They had that vision with my voice. The song has a *sufiyanapan* and *aawargi* in it. There’s some freedom and flight in the song, which touches everyone’s soul.

**You have sung songs not just in Hindi but also in Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Assamese. How do you prepare for songs in different languages?**

Learning a new language in a short span is very difficult so I try to understand the phonetics of the song. For every language, if a singer works on its phonetics, then a singer can sound like a native singer. So, for singing in different languages, I usually translate the meaning of the line or word and write on top of it. So, when I sing that song, I first focus on the flow of the phonetics while understanding its meaning in my mind. It works out, I think. I am very focused and sharp-minded when I am in the studio. Otherwise, I am a very lost guy.

**So, don’t you face any problem while singing in different languages...**

Before I take up any project, I tell the composer that this would require a lot of time and effort. If they are ready to devote time, then we do it! When it comes to regional, the first thing I look for in a composer I am working with is patience. If the composer has patience, then we can spend some time perfecting otherwise, it would just put me in a spot where the audience would be thinking what is this guy singing? So I guess that kind of attitude and nature that we have to work on a song from scratch and build yourself with the song is my way of working on it. Sometimes, it takes time. Sometimes, we finish it in some hours. So for that reason, I ask my composers to prepare beforehand and be patient with the process. So like that we are able to crack a song. There are times when the composer is satisfied with the take but I am not. So I redo it until I am satisfied. I guess that is for the greater good.



### How do you choose your projects?

Honestly, my projects choose me. I get all sorts of projects from all around the world – different languages, genres, and artists. I have even come across as somebody who has worked with a lot of first-time composers. Many composers have had their first hits with me. Sometimes, even I get to do my “first” of any genre with them. I feel when composers are well-established, they are so equipped that a person like me cannot cope with their

“ **Lut Gaye or all the recent ones that I have done, are songs that I genuinely like – these are great songs.** ”

pace. But if a composer is new, we can find a wavelength and adjust. I have been singing in this industry for seven years but even now, when I dub a song, I sing it as my first. I attempt every song as a newbie. So that keeps my voice fresh. Many times, I get projects which I think would be nice but actually aren't. Then there are songs where I feel that they would be extremely difficult to sing but turn out to be extremely enjoyable when I sing them. So right now, I am in a place where I try to listen to a lot of songs, I sing a lot of songs then whichever song emits a good vibe, I choose those songs. That is why I said that the projects have been choosing me.

**You have sung so many romantic tracks, is that your favourite genre? If not, then which one?**

I must come across as a person with a romantic face, that's why! (laughs) I have been singing romantic tracks since the beginning. I sang a sad track called *Tujhe Kitna Chaahe Hum* while

performing on a stage and the video went viral. Ever since then, I think people feel there's some kind of melancholy in my voice. If you look across all the genres, sad songs have the greatest shelf life. My song *Humnava Mere* which was released in 2018 is still going strong on YouTube and has crossed 500 million views even though there were no heavy promotions behind it. It was my first single. We just did it, shot it, and put it out there. It's been four years and it's still relevant. So I guess people have started associating my voice with sadness or melancholy. It was then that Rochak *paaji* asked me to sing a *qawaali*.







That started a completely different genre for me where I am singing *Kinna Sona*, *Bewafa Tera Masoom Chehra*, *Lut Gaye*, and all. I feel, all the genres have romance in them. Whether it's a sad song or a party number. I think I sing for God so there is always romance in it. It takes you to a different space.

**“ Music business politics... I have experienced it. But do I remember it? No. If something like that happens with me, I just move on. ”**

When the lockdown started, I sang a lot of *bhajans* and released them. I got a chance to touch a different kind of divinity through it. So now whenever I sing any song, I recall that aura and feeling, and that kind of fills up the song with romance.

**You did a rooftop concert on 14th February to raise funds for those affected by the recent glacier burst in Uttarakhand. How was your experience?**

February 14 is a day which we remember for love. So when lockdown began, I came home. I came from a world tour where I did 22 concerts in 29 days. That is a lot of traveling, touring, and playing music. I broke a record where we kind of nailed 22 concerts in 29 days. It was challenging and it also meant playing every day at big venues with 5000 + people. Some had 65000+ too. Then suddenly there was a lockdown and I shifted back home and the whole environment changed. That's when I decided to do a garden concert when coronavirus and all began. So that was like a small message from me that as humans, we all stand together.



There is music that connects us so stay home, stay safe. We will make it through it. That was the message that went through that garden concert. I went through it in a very limited capacity and resources. Then 14th February, the lockdown was open, we stood tall as a society. Things could have been so much worse in India.

**“ My songs went really viral during the lockdown. I have given the biggest hits in the lockdown. ”**

We are still struggling but we still pulled through some how. So this was that message that I wanted to tell people that if we can fight a pandemic like coronavirus, which will probably go down in history books; then I am sure we can fight a flood that we faced in Chamoli, Uttarakhand. From that concert, we gathered somewhere around ₹ 13.5 - ₹ 14 lakh rupees and I handed it to the State Government for relief. I might even go to Chamoli and gift this to the people. I think these are the things that keep me fresh. So that's what we did. We did a concert on the rooftop of a hotel and there were around 2,000 people standing on the road and street and enjoying the show. We kind of pulled it through which is amazing. As an artist, all we want to do is something we get remembered for and I guess this might be one of those things.

**Which is the hardest song that you have recorded till date? Why?**

I think it would be *Zindagi Kuch Toh Bata* from *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. I think also because there was so much pressure involved. I mean it was Salman Khan. Then Kabir Khan was

the director, Pritam Chakraborty was the music director. So it had all the top names associated with it. There was a lot of pressure involved in the song and it really took me a lot of time to dub it. I dubbed it when I almost lost faith. I felt like I won't be able to do this song. Pritam sir was happy with the first take only, but when your voice is going to scale to billions of people, in that scenario you have to ace. I dubbed it for 6 days. I used to go every day and dub it, push it a little further. Finally, one fine day we got it and that's what you hear.

**There are a lot of remixes happening nowadays. What are your thoughts on this?**

...As far as you don't want to break barriers or make something better than the previous one and you are celebrating the song, you are good with it. For example, *Lut Gaye* or all the recent ones that I have done, are songs that I genuinely like - these are great songs. And as a fan I love them. Whenever I dub them with an intention of celebrating the song that I love, it always works. People like it and it adds a lot of genuinity to it. When you make songs that are not genuine and you are trying to beat the previous song, that's when you mess up and create something that people don't like and will criticize. Right now, I am doing a series of songs that would take you back to the '90s. Some time ago, the music got really polluted. There were senseless lyrics and little-little kids used to sing them. Music was always made for message and motivation. It is the only thing that everybody connects to unanimously. But the music industry got really dark for a while. Some times I hear small kids singing vulgar lyrics and it is distressing. That's why I respect the '90s because it was nice and clean, very romantic, and soul connecting. There is a big gap between when I was younger and younger ones today in terms of emotionally connecting.





**According to you, what qualities should a singer possess before entering this industry?**

*Sur and Taal* is something which is obvious, it has to be there in your preparation but in order to sustain, you have to have honesty in your voice. And honesty comes with conviction. When you are convinced about what you are singing, it will be an honest take. Instead of singing the lyrics of the song, you are supposed to say the lyrics of the song. When I am saying something to someone, that adds more intensity to it. That is the intensity you need to capture while singing it. So think like you are saying it but you are singing it.

**Jubin, what are your thoughts on music business politics? Does it still exist in the industry? Have you experienced it in any way?**

Politics has become a very crucial part of all genres of life. Every line of work has certain politics. There is favoritism, likes-dislikes, or profit/loss. Music is also a business. It is a creative line so politics is inevitable. But on the brighter side, I would say that since we have a talent-rated line of work, we don't have just one person sitting in power and holding a file in his hand. We have billions of people for

that. If it's good, it gets out. There are so many lines of work where even if things are good, people can suppress your files and work. In this line of work, we are living in a time where the internet has blown things out of proportion. Artists from nowhere are coming and getting to do music. Independent music is on a rise. So that is like a big plus for us that people belonging to a small town like me can dream of being big musicians just

**“ Even if I was not as big as I am, I would still be sitting in a small club with my guitar or something. ”**

because of talent. I believe that if the talent is believed, it is something you can't hide. It is going to shine in its own time. Music business politics, I have experienced it. But do I remember it? No. If something like that happens with me, I just move on. ... Because I think my voice is not made for one song, it is made for millions of songs. So, if something like that happens, I just say it's their loss and I move on.





**Do you think you missed any chances because you don't come from a filmi family?**

At some point in time, I used to feel that I missed a lot of chances but now I feel that I would not have liked it any other way. My songs went really viral during the lockdown. I have given the biggest hits in the lockdown. I'm getting to be

**“ Right now, I'm kicked about releasing the videos of the songs that I played on the live streaming platform for the relief fund. ”**

with my family in the mountains while this is happening. So, if all this would have happened earlier, I don't think I would have enjoyed it that much. I am getting to creatively explore myself in ways I never thought I would. I think in the whole hustle-bustle of Mumbai I forgot as to why I started doing music in the first place. I started doing it because

it was the only thing that made me happy. I have started doing it again because it makes me happy and the take and work that happens after that is just beautiful. It helps me grow as an artist. Now I am just riding my wave and enjoying it, breaking more boundaries.

**Are there any regrets in your musical journey?**

None. I don't think I am someone who holds regrets. I think that God has chosen me to sing. Even if I was not as big as I am, I would still be sitting in a small club with my guitar or something. So that keeps me satisfied and happy. I am occupied. That keeps my days shorter and nights longer.

**What's next in terms of future projects?**

Well, in *Satyamev Jayate 2* you will get to hear a big song in my voice. There are a couple of more music videos coming soon. Right now, I'm kicked about releasing the videos of the songs that I played on the live streaming platform for the relief fund. I think people are really going to like the whole concept of what we tried to do here from the mountains. It is going to definitely take you on a small trip to the mountains.



# THE MOST AWAITED WEB SERIES SEQUELS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2021...

Over the last few years, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that there has been a revolution in digital content in India, especially for web series. Content has evolved from stereotypical Indian soaps on television to thought provoking and engaging web series on streaming platforms. There is a lot of appreciation from Indians on the fresh approaches taken by creators, producers, which has led to an increase in binge watching. Due to popular demand, many shows are returning to screens with sequels to entertain the masses. Here is a list of the top 5 shows that are the most awaited in 2021.

## The Family Man 2

The Family Man is an action-thriller web series which kept us at the edge of our seats. The ever-charming Manoj Bajpayee who played Shrikant Tiwari, an intelligence officer won our hearts and left us wanting for more, especially given the cliffhanger ending of season 1. The much awaited season 2 of The Family Man is expected to release in the summer of 2021.

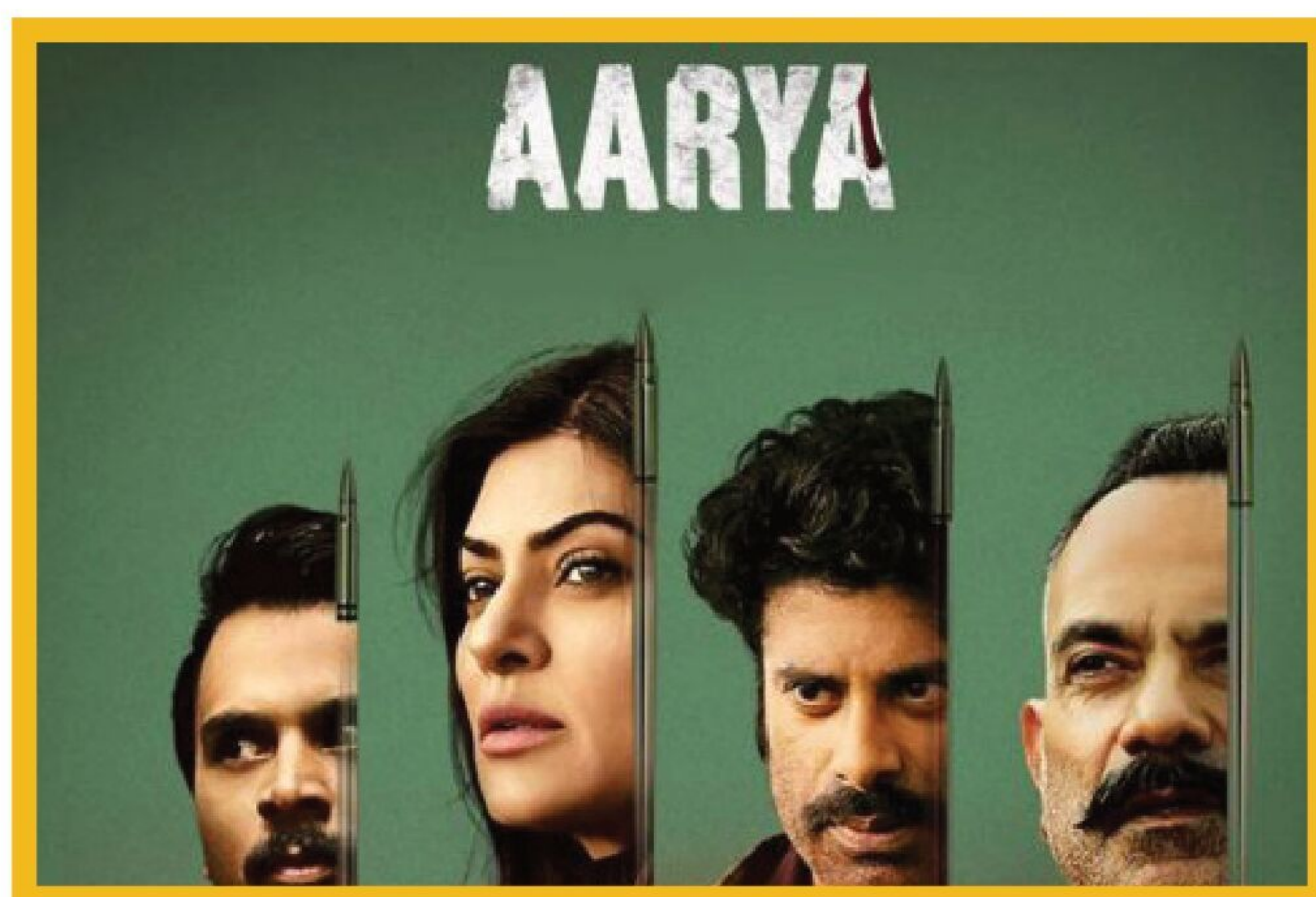
**Launching on Amazon Prime Video**



## Aarya 2

Sushmita Sen made her comeback with Aarya, a crime drama which received critical acclaim in the first season. Her strong headed character in the show was commendable. The cast recently announced the commencement of shooting for the second season, leaving their fans thrilled in anticipation.

**Launching on Disney+ Hotstar**





## Operation MBBS 2

Dice Media's Operation MBBS was the hit drama web series which highlighted the journey of three medical aspirants. In its second season, the show brings to light the sacrifices made by the medical community when the COVID19 pandemic hit the world. The series will also unfold a myriad of situations that bring on new twists in the lives of the three protagonists played by the well received on-screen trio Ayush Mehra, Sarah Hashmi, and Anshul Chauhan. The first episode of season 2 will release on March 15th, 2021.

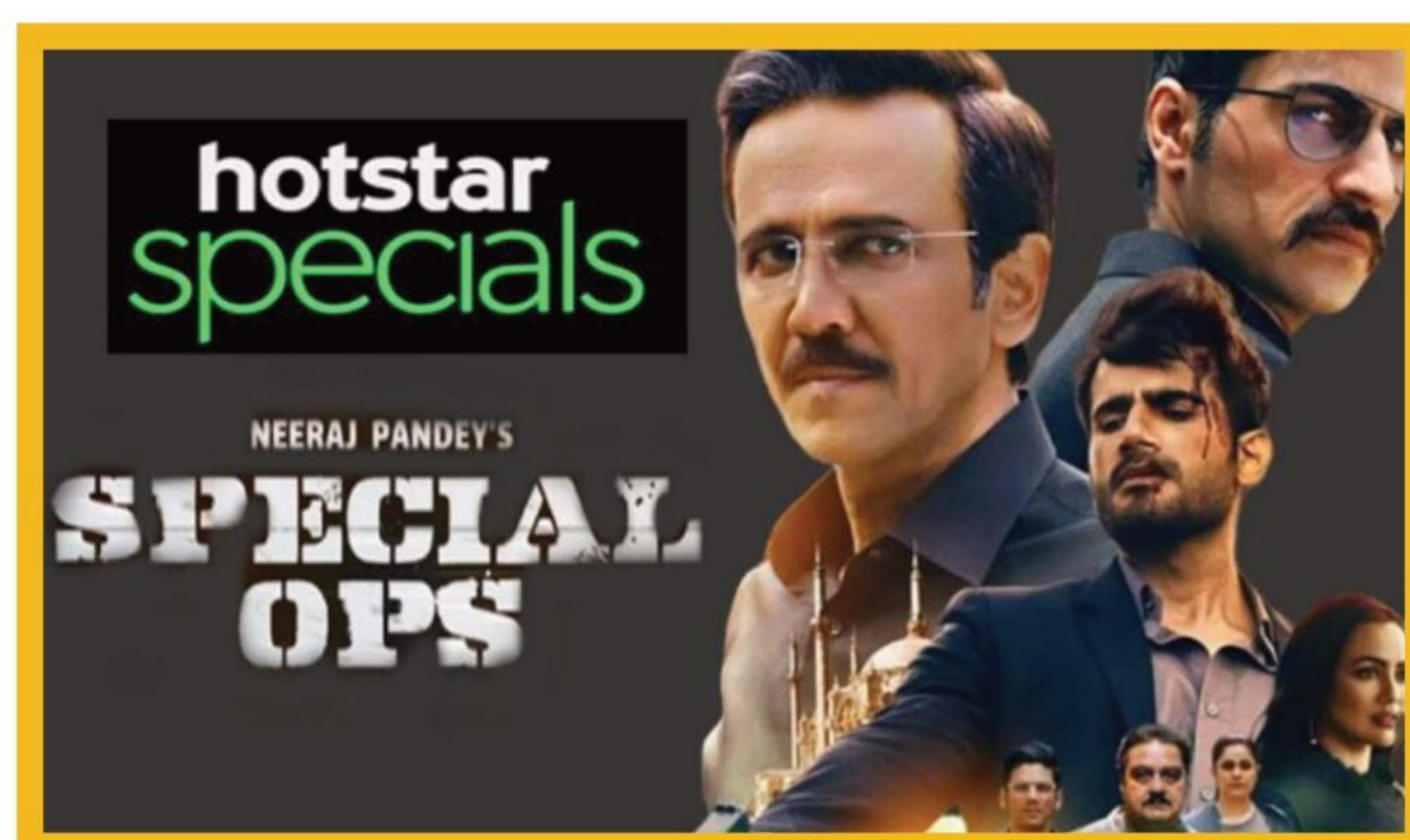
**Launching on Dice Media Channel**



## Special Ops 2

In its first season, Special Ops made an impact among audiences for its crisp narratives and very intriguing storyline. The makers of the series recently announced Special Ops 1.5 will be releasing soon. The new season is expected to take viewers back to 2001 and explore the formative years of Himmat Singh (Kay Kay Menon).

**Launching on Disney+ Hotstar**



## Delhi Crime 2

Based on the horrific gang rape incident that took place in 2012, season 1 had viewers hooked on to Delhi Crime for its hard hitting narrative. Audiences can look forward to an equally engrossing season 2, featuring the star cast Shefali Shah, Rasika Dugal, and Rajesh Tailang among others

**Launching on NetFlix**





A portrait of actress Shabana Azmi. She has dark, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, top with a V-neckline and a thin necklace. The background is dark with out-of-focus light spots, creating a bokeh effect.

*Blast from  
the past*

**STEP DOWN  
SHABANA AZMI!**

**“Living with somebody’s husband is not liberation!”  
An Emancipated Moon Moon Sen Strikes The Scene!**



She did not find the need to have her lover's baby like Hema Malini.

She is not opposed to marriage the way Shabana Azmi (who thinks married women are pathetic) or Zeenat Aman (who'll go in for a gold band only when she's ready for a baby) are.

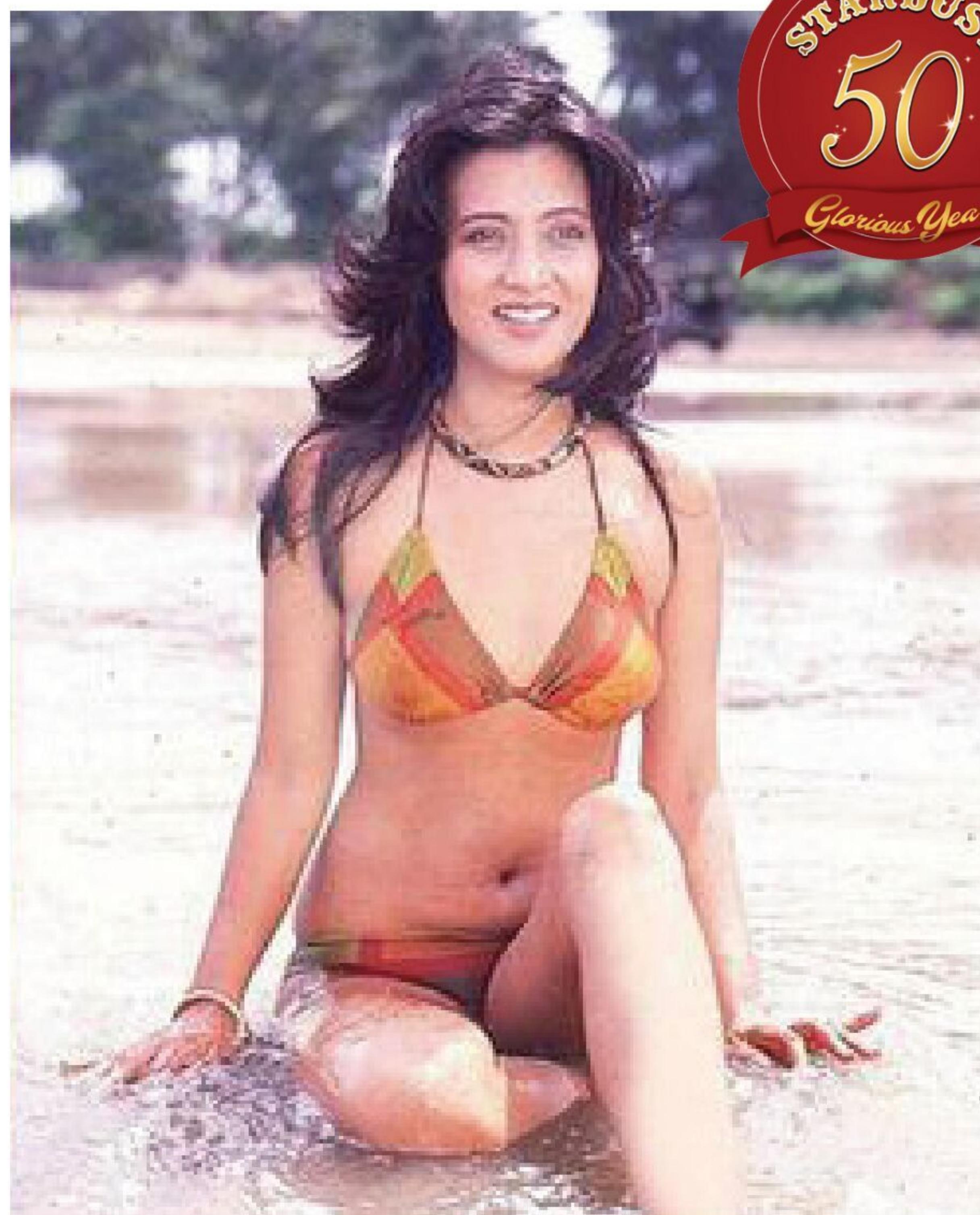
She's not involved in any causes for a woman like Smita Patil is with her Remand Home.

She did not leave her husband, Raakhee or Dimple style, to follow a starry dream.

She's one step ahead of the 'most complete woman in the industry' Sharmila Tagore – in the sense that unlike La Tagore, she (very Jeetendra – like) has left behind a home, husband and family in Calcutta to pursue her career in Bombay.

Out here, Moon Moon Sen lives a totally abandoned life. She doesn't think twice before going for late night booze, dinner and dancing binges, dating the men she likes and freaking out on life. This has raised many an eyebrow, questioned her integrity, labelled her a *chaalucheez*, branded her husband as hen-pecked and a *bechara* ... and the unfortunate part is that the very heroines who are yelling themselves hoarse about liberation, emancipation and waiting to change the industry (if not the world) are the ones who are indulging in gossiping about this woman who has put into practice what they have been so far preaching and (looks like) meaninglessly talking about.

Moon Moon Sen achieved everything that libbers like Shabana, Smita, Zeenat, etc. have been wanting to for years and unlike the rest, she hasn't been screaming about it from roof-tops. She's a wife, a mother (of two pretty girls) and a working woman (as she prefers to call herself). She does

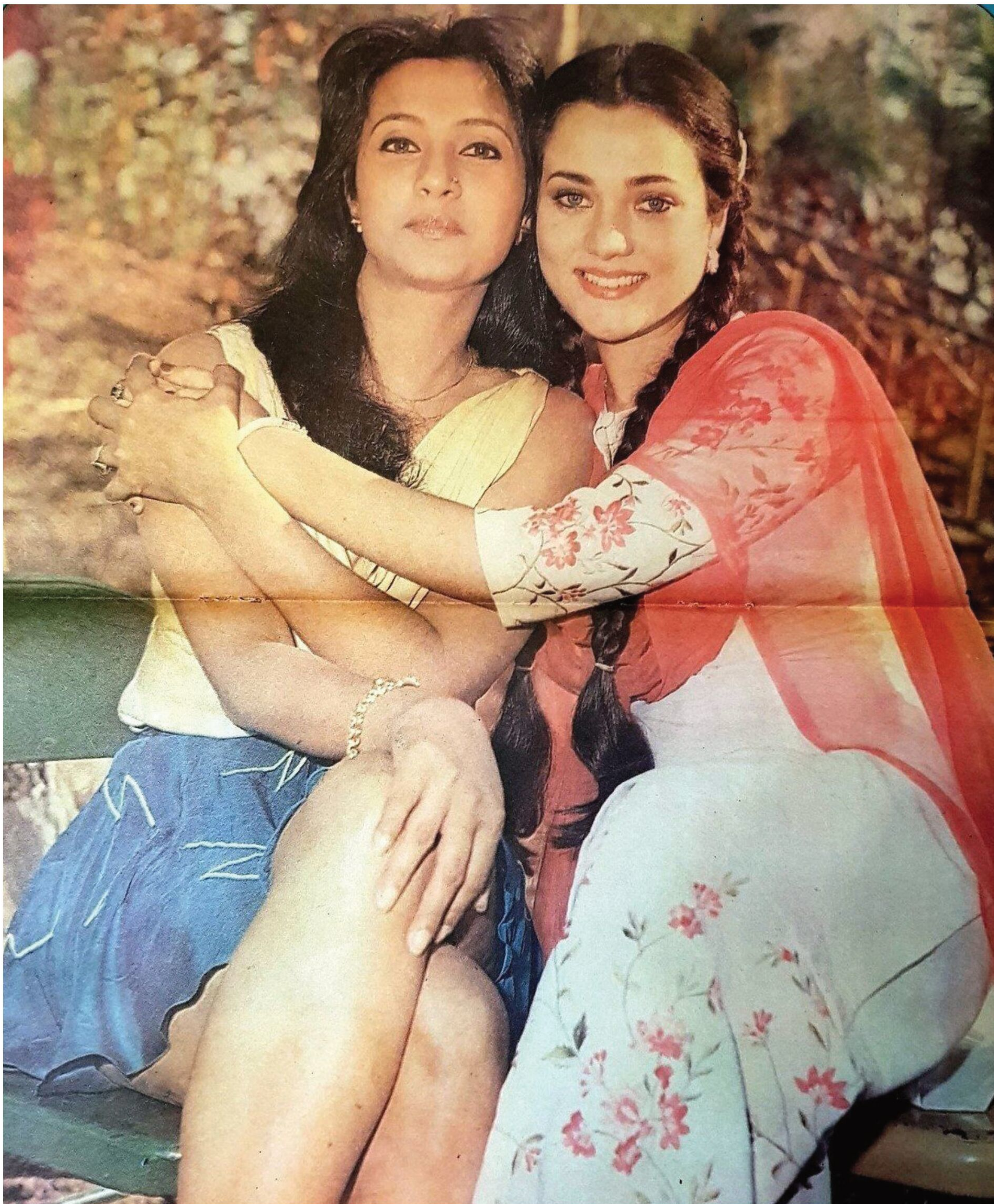


not believe that a wife's place is in the kitchen or that a husband who looks after a home is a *joroo ka ghulam*. And though she considers herself as emancipated, she has never bothered to find out if she is the most liberated woman in the industry ("doesn't make sense"). All she knows is that "you have to have an emancipated husband to be a liberated woman."

Ms. Sen tells her story and views her airs on her concept of being a liberated woman in this world of male chauvinist pigs...







The common concept of being very bold daring and brash and living with somebody's husband is not liberation.

Neither is a married woman who goes around humping from one bed to another, changing men as fast as she gets in and out of clothes, emancipation. Yes, it could in a twisted, complexed way, be a sexual liberation for her, from which she may be releasing many childhood hang ups, or

trying to assert herself as a woman in a very frivolous manner. She may think that if I'm accepted by twenty men, I'm equal to them. Or that it makes me a very desirable woman'. But that has got nothing to do with emancipation.

Again, wearing skimpy swim-suits and posing for pictures the way I do or talking mindlessly without thinking what I'm saying, passing silly statements all because I'm in a





frivolous mood is not being liberated either. So if you think that I'm the most liberated woman in this industry only because you've read about my various affairs or have seen me daring and baring on screen and magazine covers. I'm sorry you're on the wrong track.

Yes, I'm actually saying what you do not want to hear, and that is, that I haven't had an affair after my marriage to Habi. And I don't want to have one either. I do not deny the possibility of being, terribly attracted to a man, or that my husband could be attracted to another woman. But I only hope that we can keep these attractions in their place and do not break up everything else in the process. It's very important to try and control relationships and realise where your priorities lie. My top priorities are husband and children today.

Taking it easy when your husband has an affair and trying your best to stop your home from disintegrating, is not being a doormat.

I am by nature, very impulsive, passionate and possessive. And I used to think that if my husband ever looks at another woman. I'll walk out on him. When you have children and a home and you've built up a companionship over the years with shared

interests and common goals, you feel that may be 'another woman' is something you can handle, and not fly off in a temper, pack your bags and leave home.

At this particular stage of my life and marriage, if such a thing had happened to me, I would first talk it out with my husband, find out if she is important enough for him to want to leave me and if he says yes, then there is nothing I can do about it. I would hurt like hell and would probably break everything in the house and even physically assault him, but I would realise that there's nothing left for him and me to go on and I wouldn't prolong the relationship. No matter how much you hurt, or how much you love a man, if he doesn't love you, accept it. You can't stay on or cling to him in spite of it. I cannot do that.

But if he says, that he values the home as much as I do and would like to come back, maybe it's important to give him some time. Maybe, another way of handling it is pretending it doesn't exist. Because sometimes men indulge in little fantasies.







If it's a small thing (I don't think Habi would indulge in it), but say a moment's passion or a drunken party which ended somewhere else, I would not accept it, I would hurt as hell, but I would say that my marriage is more important than that, so let me overlook it.

Being or not being married has got nothing to do with liberation. In fact, to keep a marriage going for twenty or more years is an achievement, a plus point.

I do not believe in the institution of marriage. I think it's very false and an artificial concept. When you can't live with yourself, to be forced to live with another person, is terrible. I would prefer to live with a man outside marriage, than get married to him. But then, our society does not believe in that. I may not agree with it, but I have chosen to live according to the rules of society and so I chose to believe in the institution of marriage.

Right or wrong I don't know, more than marriage. I wanted to possess my husband.

I just wanted him for my own. I didn't want to share him with anyone. Being emotional about a man is natural. You don't have to be detached to say 'I'm a woman's libber!'

You certainly do not lose your individuality with marriage. Habi has contributed to my individuality. I know people like Naseeruddin Shah won't believe it and will laugh themselves silly when they read this, but my husband is proud of me. Because he says that though just one of my films is released. I have been accepted by a large number of people as an individual, which is interesting. I'm a personality. I am also my mother's daughter living very much under her shadow and out of it, for the people who know me well.

There's nothing demeaning in making a marriage work, or working on it. When we married, we had nothing in common. We came from two different lives. I used to have my dinner of boiled food alone and go to bed by 9 o'clock while he was entertaining guests. I was a bore and was called the baby





of the family. He was older, wiser and much more fun. Somewhere along the way, both of us realised that we should have common interests if we liked travelling. Both of us enjoyed good food and he taught me how to eat different kinds of food. We both loved shopping for antique furniture. I took an enormous interest in his family back ground, because I find history very romantic. We have another common interest – we have a passion for people.

One conscious effort we made to make a boring life interesting was to have a goal every year. It gives you something to work towards together, something to look forward to. First year we had a baby. I was obsessed with wanting a child because to me as a woman and not as a wife. I needed to know that I functioned fully – that my uterus, my tubes were all in working order. The next year we bought some land in Delhi. Then Habi changed from one department to another in his office and that opened up a different potential for him and I took an

immense interest in it as well. The year after that, Habi forced me to get into modelling. I tried it and loved it. He forced me to accept a film offer. He said there were thousands of women who do not get the kind of opportunities I have and that I should try it, and then leave it if I want to. 'Don't knock it down now, because you'll regret it when you're sixty years old,' he said. These are the different things which are keeping our marriage alive everybody.

I share his office, he shares my world. I discover a friend like Ramesh Khanna or Romu Sippy and take them to Calcutta to live with us. Now he's in office very busy, but he's also hunting around for Romu's distributor in Calcutta. The other day Jabbar Patel wanted to know if I could find him a distributor. I told him, I'll ask Habi. It's mutual. It works two ways –no false egos, no hang-ups. You have to be involved in each other's work to keep the interest alive, because with time, romance flies and sex is not too often.





It's not a question that you're a woman, so you cook, keep house and do the bazaar.

Habi is a gourmet, he looks after the cooking, which I can't do. Every time I try looking after



the house. I'm a neurotic mess. So between ourselves, we've worked things out. So far, we're doing a damn good job. I don't know how long it's going to last. We believe in fate. If I'm fated to live with him for five years.



I hope I come out of it saying I had damn good five years and I don't regret anything. Both of us are liberated enough to talk about our attractions to the opposite sex.

I fell in love with K. K. Mahajan. He was my first crush in Bombay. I could talk of nothing else but this man. So every time I came to Bombay. Habi would give me a bottle of whisky and say, 'go give it to your boyfriend'. He knows where things end and where they start. He adores Romu. But he's not the kind of man who'll stand me having an affair.



I don't believe in equality. I believe women are far more evolved than men are.

In an emotional crisis, a man can be helped out enormously by a woman. A man cannot bear a child. Okay, we can't pee standing up – but a man is talking crap when he says he is superior.

My concept of liberation is very different. Liberation to me is the development of myself, which in turn gives me maturity, poise, sophistication, confidence. It means





economic independence and freedom from my complexes. It also means not to become a second class citizen which even a man can be.

More than Shabana Azmi and Smita Patil, who are considered to be libbers in the industry, I admire some ladies who I haven't met at all, and whom I have just been introduced to. One is Madhu Jaffrey – I have always admired her as a person. Later, on as I grew up and read about her in articles – I still don't know enough about her – I feel she is very liberated because she is doing what she wants to – she does radio, films, T.V. She is married has kept up a home, is a very gracious and dignified lady and she's alive. Another lady who is also liberated on a completely different level is Nadira. She's somebody who is forceful. She is woman who hasn't made a fool of herself. She lives her life the way she wants to, she's independent. She must be hurting like hell sometimes it must be terribly lonely, but she has never really collapsed. She's somebody I admire. Sitaradevi is another



libber. She leads a very unconventional life, but she is so accomplished. To me the main thing attractive in a man/woman is someone who is terribly accomplished and very specialised I can forgive them anything. I'm attracted to women like that and that for me is liberation – Coming to terms with yourself, accepting your faults, developing your skills. You accept yourself as a person and try to relate to other people on that level. Developing yourself as a better human being is emancipation in the real sense of them.

## ◀ FAST FORWARD ▶



Moon Moon Sen, the daughter of Suchitra Sen, perhaps did not scale the fame and success her mother had. But she had her own charisma and sex appeal. A lot of actors of her time were enamoured by her husky Bengali accent and lissom figure. But it's been some time that she left the Hindi film industry. She did do a few Bengali films but after that, she was a bit of a socialite flitting around in Kolkata's eclectic arty circles. However, she proved to be a woman of substance when she joined politics and to be fair to her, she did her share of good work. Today, she's happily settled in Kolkata with her prince husband, dabbles in social work and does do the odd films that come her way.

**- Sumita Chakraborty**





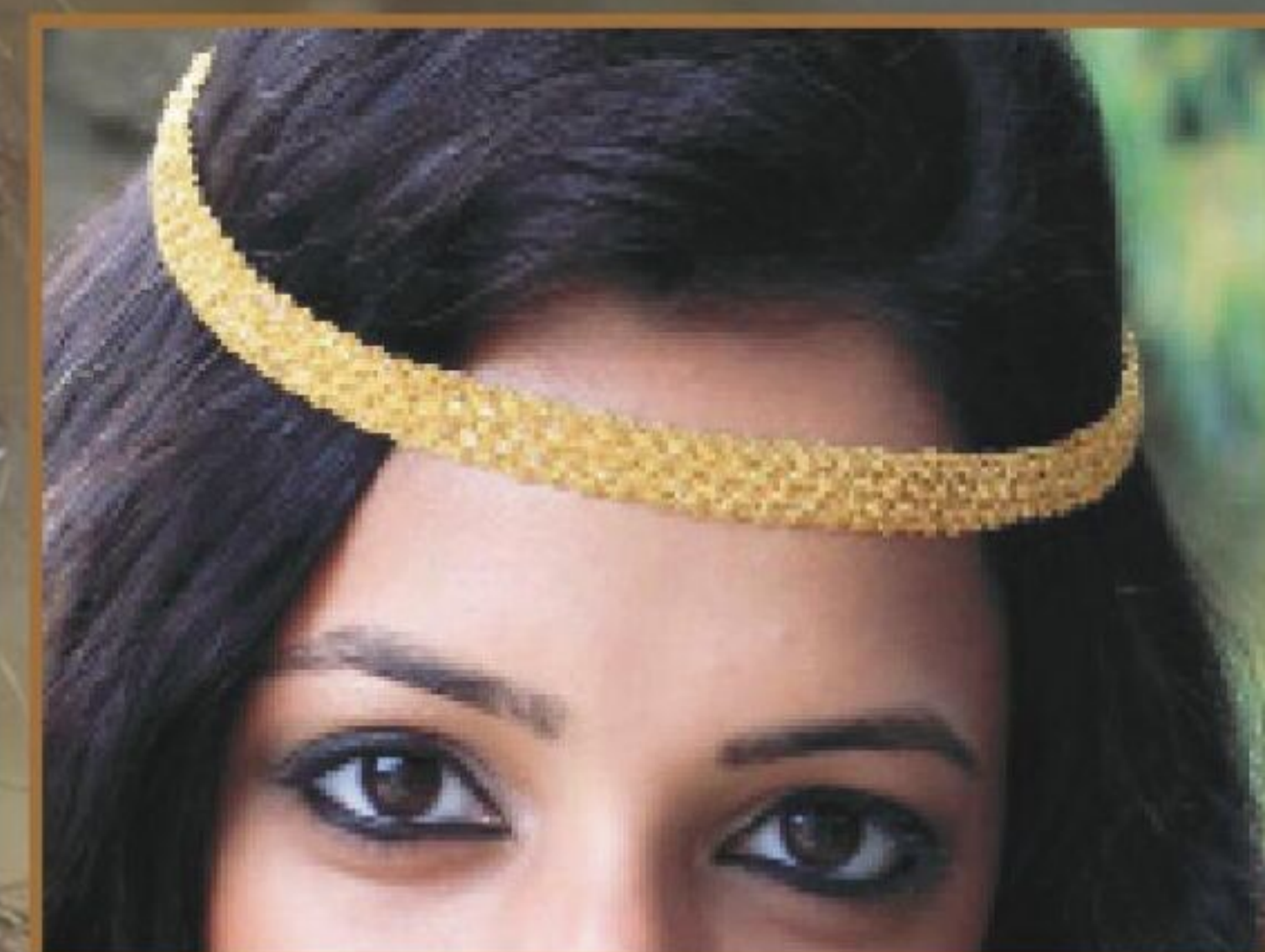
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